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TUTOR'S LANE

by

WILMARTH LEWIS

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Tutors' Lane

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FALL, 1922

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TUTORS' LANE

WILMARTH LEWIS

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NEW YORK ~ 1922

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To
Helen and Wilson Follett

LORD TOLLOLLER: *". . . . of birth and position I've plenty;*
I've grammar and spelling for two,
And blood and behavior for twenty."

IOLANTHE.

Tutors' Lane

A SYLLABUS

Having once, for a few months, had a literary column in a newspaper, I have come to admire those authors who place at the beginning of their books a "word" in which the whole thing is given away. The time that those words saved me in writing my reviews—time which otherwise would have been lost in reading the books—enabled me to write this book; a consummation which may have, in its heart, a significant kernel, and which certainly shows how funny the world is, after all.

Now, as to this book and what it is all about, I frankly am at a loss. That's the difficulty of being too near it. Whether it is realism, naturalism, or merely restrained romanticism, I simply do not know. It is awkward not knowing, for in the battle of the schools now raging I should like to take sides. I should like either to charge with the romantics, or defend with the realists. It must be good fun being pushed and shoved around, with someone's elbow in your eye and someone else's hatpin in your ear, and everyone crying, in the words of a recent heroine, "I want to be outraged." But, for the present at least, I must be content, like little Oliver Twist, to look hungrily on.

The story which trickles through the book starts

out bravely enough. Of this much, at least, I can be moderately sure. For a short time it looks as though something might come of it; but nothing really does. It is all so terribly obvious. There are no obstacles such as one finds in real fiction; there is no love spasm in Chapter XXV. There is no Chapter XXV at all! And so it must be perfectly clear that those who insist upon having their love spasms will be bored to death by *Tutors' Lane* and should on no account be allowed to look at it. There is love, of course, in an academic community; one frequently sees evidences of it; but it is love under control, properly subordinated to the all important business of uniting youth and learning —and to snatching time for an occasional rejuvenating flutter in the sacred fount itself.

So the syllabus is little more than a nervous shake of the hand and a timid statement of a few negative "points"—a disheartening, if not positively dangerous, affair. That there are lurking beauties, however, peeping shyly out like johnny-jump-ups and wild raspberry blossoms, there appears to be some evidence on the jacket. Meanwhile, the course is open, the bell is ringing to class, and the instructor, turning over the text to Chapter I, is prepared to meet whatever scholars God, in his greater wisdom, has been pleased to set before him.

I

TOM REYNOLDS, Instructor in English in Woodbridge College, walked along Tutors' Lane in the gathering dusk of a March afternoon. Persons whose knowledge of collegiate dons is limited to the poverty-stricken, butterfly-chasing genus created by humorous scenario writers would be surprised to learn that our hero—for such he is to be—was young, sound of wind and limb, and at the present moment comfortably clothed in a coon-skin coat. The latter touch might be accounted for by such persons on the basis of an eccentric city cousin generously disposed to casting off his garments when only half worn, but the other two points must convince them of the faithlessness of the whole account, and their acquaintance with the young man will accordingly end with the first paragraph.

Woodbridge College, as a matter of fact, has never been without a few young men of this type in its Faculty. Situated in southern New England, it has roots which extend well back into the Eighteenth Century, and its traditions, keeping pace with its growth, rival in dignity and picturesqueness those of its larger neighbours. Whereas they have expanded from Colleges to Universities, Woodbridge

has been content to restrict its enrolment to six hundred; and instead of making entrance easier it has, if anything, made it harder. Accordingly, the College holds it head high, not unconscious that the quality of its instruction and of its graduates is unsurpassed.

The Founders of the College placed their first building on the crest of a smallish plateau which commands a view of the Blackmoor Valley. Succeeding generations have scattered its buildings haphazardly about, but, thanks to the generosity of a Woodbridge son, the meadow land which slopes away from the crest down to the Lebanon River, sixty acres in all, was bought and given to the College; and upon this land the future College is to rise. There is a good deal of rather vague talk about this new college—of the quadrangle which is to solve all dormitory and recitation problems, and which is to shine with beauty. But at present the meadow is sacred to athletics, and the elaborate new boat house, completed last spring, seems to make the quadrangle less of a probability than ever.

Tutors' Lane is the main artery of the place. It passes through the college green and on down the hill through a row of faculty houses until it reaches the village of Woodbridge Center, or, as it is usually called, Center. It is a famous street—famous for its elms, which supply, as it has not infrequently been pointed out, the dignity of a nave; famous for the doorways and windows of its colonial

houses; and famous for the distinction and propriety of its inhabitants.

It is one of the Woodbridge traditions that these houses are inviolate. Assistant Professors' wives, upon taking up residence in Tutors' Lane, are tactfully warned that it is not the thing to alter them. There may be an occasional painting, yes; but innovations in the way of building are not to be thought of. People who have to build are advised to do it elsewhere; certain streets are provided for the purpose—High Street, for example—and though of course they are not Tutors' Lane, doubtless they are livable enough. In fact, High Street is distinctly coming into its own, thanks, of course, to the High Street Cemetery. For a mortal existence in Tutors' Lane is followed by an immortal one in the High Street Cemetery, and though perhaps those who spend mortality in the Street can hardly expect to enjoy immortality in the Cemetery, nevertheless, no one can take from them the satisfaction of being the neighbors of the oldest families who are doing so. Property is steadily rising in High Street, accordingly, and now Assistant Professors and their wives do well indeed to settle there.

Tutors' Lane is not particularly wide for such an important thoroughfare. Two vehicles can pass without difficulty, but it is well for them not to rush by. If they are in a hurry, they had better take either Meadow Street, which skirts the athletic field, or High Street, which is wide and oiled and designed for heavy traffic. Tutors' Lane is not oiled, and

heaven forfend that it ever should be, for its foundations go far back into the past, farther perhaps than any one dreams. No less a person than old Mrs. Baxter is authority for the statement that it follows the course of an old Roman road. It is incredible, of course, and opens up a vista of pre-Columbian discovery more astonishing than any to be found in the Book of Mormon, but Mrs. Baxter was a noted controversialist in her day and, true or false, she succeeded in handing down the story to the present generation.

People who think of an ordinary row of city houses have no conception of Faculty Row. For one thing, the lots are of widely different sizes. Some, like the one owned by the Misses Forbes, daughters of the geologist, are modest affairs with forty-foot fronts. Others, like Dean Norris's, cover two acres. Those built before 1800 have their birth-years painted carefully over their doorways, and it is an unwritten law that younger houses may not claim this privilege. Many are sheltered by box hedges, and none but has its garden—in which flowers other than hollyhocks, mignonette, larkspur, stock, and bachelor's buttons are considered slightly *nouveaux venus*.

As to the occupants of these houses, volumes many times the size of this one might be written. Suffice it for the present, however, that they are quite superior to the general indifference of the outside world, and that, like the dwellers in Cranford, though some may be poor, all are aristocratic.

To Tom Reynolds, walking along Tutors' Lane in the dusk of a March afternoon, the scene was considerably different from the verdant one just sketched. Instead of peeping out behind their holly hocks and vines, the houses were still defensively wrapped up against the ice which besieged their walls. Storm doors could not yet be dispensed with, and here and there some practical soul—doubtless connected with the Physics Department—had by means of a railing insured himself against the painful mortification of an icy step. Walking is never good in Tutors' Lane during the winter. Cement walks are not laid, and temporary boards smack a little too much of a makeshift. Arctics are the invariable rule, but even so the going is not easy, and it is particularly bad at this time of year, for now it is that arctics, which never seem able to last through a winter, suddenly give out at the heel and fill with mud and slush.

Tom walked on until he came to the Dean's driveway, and then he turned into it. During his college days he had spent a considerable amount of time at the Dean's house, and now, in the first year of his Instructorship, he was there more than ever. His own home in Ephesus, New York, being at the present time occupied by a stepmother for whom he had no particular affection and a father whose interests were in the drygoods rather than the scholastic line, he scarcely thought of himself as having a home other than that made for him by the Dean's wife. It was true that there was an older

sister whose husband was a lawyer in Omaha, but she had never approved of his bringing up, and, since she was convinced that he had been spoiled beyond repair, their separation was merciful. At Christmas the family exchanged cheques, and Tom dutifully sent what the Telegraph Company called a "Yule Tide Message," tastefully decorated free of charge. But there family ties ended.

They had really ended sixteen years ago when the nine-year-old Tom had been led up to take a terrified look at his mother's dead face and had then been allowed to escape to the rear of the house for a season of uncontrollable weeping. From that time on until five years later when he came in contact with Mr. Hilton, Instructor in English at the High School, he had led the life of a "queer" boy. Devoted to reading and content, in default of other youth who interested him, to stay by himself, he was a hopeless enigma to his father, whose memories of youth, strengthened by contemporary examination of his "cash boys," were of a radically different sort. But with the attainment of High School and Mr. Hilton the world changed. For the first time since his mother's death Tom met a congenial spirit. Mr. Hilton was gay, he was humorous, he noticed important things which other people were too stupid to notice or to appreciate. He was forever having amusing misadventures; and before long he took Tom off with him for week-end walks, and they had amusing misadventures together. No one else existed for Tom, and anything he suggested became

law. In this way Tom came to play baseball sufficiently well to be allowed in his senior year the privilege of standing in the right field of the School team.

Mr. Hilton was a Woodbridge man, and, after earnest discussion with Mr. Reynolds, he obtained permission for Tom to go to Woodbridge. The financial problem was a simple one, for Tom had awaiting him in trust a comfortable income from his mother's estate, and having him away would be cheaper for Mr. Reynolds. Beginning with Sophomore year, therefore, the previously dull curriculum took on a romantic hue, since by means of it Ephesus could be left behind forever. Studying became a "stunt," and he swept through examination after examination as though they were novels or ball games, until at length he found himself at Woodbridge.

Tom's college life after the first year had been as pleasant as college life ever is. At the start, his career was like that of most boys entering Woodbridge from a high school. His "funny" clothes and mildly awkward manners indicated that, as yet, he hardly spoke the same language as his more fortunate classmates who had been privately prepared for their higher education. He had heard something, of course, as everyone has, of the celebrated democratic tendency that obtains at Woodbridge. It was disconcerting, therefore, to be eyed by these young men as though he were a too strange bird who had somehow wandered into the zoo proper instead of staying, where he belonged, in the aviary.

He had been possessed, however, with the desire to "make good," and so avoided the little group of cynics that, in every class, leave their alma mater with gall and bitterness in their hearts. As it was, he came to admire the happy, well-dressed majority. There was an easiness of manner about them that charmed him. They were reserved and did not dull their palms with entertainment of each new-hatch'd comrade, but when they did accept one it appeared to be a thoroughgoing performance. They were the *jeunesse dorée;* but Tom frankly hoped that he might qualify for something as fine.

Tom had, as a matter of fact, qualified, and in the spring of his Junior year he had been awarded the outward and visible sign of a successful Woodbridge career—an election to Star, one of the two Senior Clubs.

This is not the place for a discussion of these two Clubs. Furthermore, they who know anything at all about Woodbridge know about them. They know well enough, without any reminder here, that an election to either is the first prize in the college social life, and they know, futhermore, that their influence extends over into graduate life, coloring it pleasantly to the end of one's days. The reticence which the members of the Clubs feel in regard to them—a reticence found highly amusing by outsiders—extends to the Woodbridge community, and there is, accordingly, a somewhat formidable atmosphere about them which is vaguely felt

by all. But here we must let the affair rest. They are not to play any other part in our story than to shed their benign influence over the hero, and we may dismiss them except for an occasional inevitable reference, with a brief statement. When, in his Sophomore year, he had made the baseball team, it had been conceded that Tom's chances of "coming across" were good, and when, later, it was discovered that he read books not prescribed in the college courses, he was "sure." The baseball, however, had come first, for it is true at Woodbridge, as well as in Ephesus, that baseball adds lustre to letters. Why he had chosen Star rather than Grave —for the choice had been given him—is a matter so intimately connected with the outstanding characteristics of the two Clubs that an explanation would promptly lead to the discussion above declined. Let it suffice, therefore, that he "went" Star because of good and sufficient reasons, and we shall have done with this delicate business.

Then the war had come; and now, after two years of service and a year in a graduate school, Tom was back, an infant member of the Faculty.

Tom loitered up the walk to the Dean's house to make the pleasure of his arrival the greater. The Norris house, a somewhat solemn brown-stone structure built in the 'thirties, fascinated him. He found it impossible to stay away for long; and now, as he rang the bell, his pulse quickened with the thought of the rooms about to be opened to him.

II

TOM stepped into the hall and threw his hat, muffler, and overcoat upon the hall bench. "Lovely day, isn't it, Norah?" he said to the maid who had let him in, receiving her "Yes, Mr. Reynolds" with a smile and a nod, and passing directly into the library.

"Why, hello, Tom," said a girl on the sofa facing the fireplace. Before her was a tea wagon and she was at present pouring a cup for a slightly stiff person in knickerbockers.

Tom shook hands with his host, lately Dean of Woodbridge and now, in the absence of the President, acting in his place. He then turned to the first gentleman, who, cup in hand, was making slow backward progress to his seat. "How do you do?" Tom said with a slight bow.

"How are you, Reynolds," the other replied, hardly noticing him.

"Henry and father have just come back from curling and they say it is perfectly rotten," continued the girl on the sofa. "Let's see, Tom, you take one lump, don't you?"

He declined on the grounds of just having had tea and retiring to a table in the rear of the tea group, idly picked up a copy of the *London Times*

Literary Supplement that was lying on it. Henry, who had apparently been interrupted, proceeded with a description of the various characters that had taken part in the curling.

Tom's interest in the *Times* was not very great, but his interest in Henry Whitman's story was even less, and he frankly allowed his gaze to wander over the books that covered the walls of the room. They were one of the things that fascinated him in the house. They extended from the floor to the ceiling and encircled the entire room, yielding only to the wide, high fireplace and the five windows. A small section encased in glass housed a few of the Dean's first editions and presentation copies, but Tom rather resented it, breaking as it did the harmony of the whole and pulling the eye to it with its reflecting panes. He had from the first made the mental reservation that, were the house his, he should take away that glass.

The dark blue velours sofa upon which Mary Norris was sitting, facing the fire, he called "The Bosom of the Norris Family," and when there were no heavy people like Henry Whitman about, he would occasionally throw himself upon it, carefully pointing out each time the pretty significance of his act. Behind the Bosom was a large and weighty desk covered with a multitude of personal letters, belonging for the most part to Mrs. Norris, a cheque-book open and face down in mute obeisance to the blotter, newspaper clippings, spectacle cases, scissors, and ash trays. In a neighbouring corner

stood a table with imperfectly stacked current magazines, a work basket filled with knitting, and a lamp crowned by a broad shade of silk with threads hanging from it, which, when twirled, stood out and looked like a miniature wheat field with the wind running through it. The lamp on the table by which Tom was sitting was an old-fashioned silver affair but recently converted to electricity. Its shade was high and dignified, and it had been discovered that when lifted from its place it could be worn as a turban.

The fireplace carried on its mantel a running commentary upon the changing details of family interest. At present, flanking the little French clock upon its centre was a variety of old glass, Eighteenth Century rum and whiskey flasks recently collected by Mrs. Norris. There were, additionally, a porcelain image of two farmers, *dos à dos,* one with rosy cheeks and flashing eye labelled "water," and the other, haggard and ill-favoured, labelled "gin"; also a brace of saturnine china cats. Above the mantel stretched an expanse of oak panelling which supported the portrait of Mrs. Norris's great-great-grandfather in a heavy gilt frame. The old gentleman, who looked amiably out from his starched neckcloth, had been a delegate to the Continental Congress and a jurist of distinction. Beside him on a table were some papers, obviously of the first importance, for they were plastered with seals, a copy of Coke on Lyttleton, and an inkpot with a quill sticking out of it. His arm was lying lightly on the

table, his cherubic face smiling back at its observer wherever he stood; and Tom imagined that his next move would be, after the manner of his great-great-granddaughter, to rise with a sweep and tip over the inkpot.

The colour in the room was chiefly contributed by the deep red curtains which hung beside the windows and which brought out and emphasized each object of kindred colour in the room. In this way were made conspicuous the turban-like shade, a lacquered calendar rest upon the desk, a footstool, and even the British Colonies on a globe hiding unobtrusively in a corner. The heavy Persian rugs echoed the note so generously that the books with reddish bindings stood out from their fellows and played their part in giving to the whole a richness that made the room remarkable.

Tom gazed at the group before him. Henry Whitman, Assistant Professor of Economics at thirty, a member of Grave, was telling a story of an Italian in Whitmanville who, when he curled, used only the broadest Scotch. When Tom had met Henry in his ingenuous days he threatened to be overwhelmed by the calm indifference of Henry's manner. The Whitman Air, inherited from a line of distinguished forebears, all but swamped him. It was as perfect and finished as some smooth old bit of jade, and as hard; a "piece" to be carefully handled, admirable only to the initiated. Tom had not yet, in the course of his initiation, come to find it admirable, although he quite appreciated its au-

thenticity. Harry's father, of the same name, had been one of the College's chief luminaries in the preceding Administration, known wherever Political Economy, as such, was known. *His* father before him had produced the Whitman Woollen Mills, which supported Whitmanville, and though they were at present in the hands of an uncle and various cousins, their beneficent influence was obviously felt by Henry. Everything about him suggested comfort and nourishment. There was in his eye a look which implied intimacy with beagle-hunting in Derbyshire, and the way he used his hands positively suggested candle light at dinner. The knickerbockers that he wore gave out a delightful heathery smell, a smell which is at its best when mingled, as at present, with the smell of superior pipe tobacco. His stockings would naturally be objects of curiosity to anyone familiar with the Whitman Mills, just as the pearls around the neck of a famous jeweller's wife would be, or the soap in the tub of a famous soap-maker. They were, as a matter of fact, excellent stockings of the heaviest, woolliest kind, and Whitman had bought them a year and a half ago in Scotland, whither he had gone after his wife's death. He still wore a mourning band about his arm in her honour, and a black knitted tie; and there was every reason to believe that he would continue to do so another year and a half. For the Whitmans always had mourned hard.

The girl on the sofa was a thoroughly healthy person of twenty-four. She played excellent female

tennis, and her golf was better than that of half of the male members at the club. Yet she had none of the mannish mannerisms that so often accompany an "athletic" girl. At the present time she was submitting herself to a rigorous course in "housekeeping," majoring in cooking and minoring in accounting, and she had taught Sunday School ever since she had been graduated from Miss Hammond's School at Mill Rock some six years ago. People instinctively liked her unless they were bored by obvious wholesomeness. And although no one ever thought of her as being particularly pretty—she was somewhat too dumpy to be thought that—people noticed her hair, which was a most fashionable shade of red. Then, of course, in as much as she had Mrs. Norris for a mother, one could never be entirely sure that she might not burst forth in some altogether unexpected and delightful manner. Her impromptu *bataille des fleurs,* for example, was still remembered in Woodbridge although it took place nearly sixteen years ago. Somewhere her attention had been caught by the picture of a cherub, or possibly seraph, perched on a cloud and pouring from a cornucopia great masses of flowers upon the delighted earth. The idea seemed such a lovely one that when, in the spring, her mother gave a card party out on the terrace, she determined to give the ladies a delightful surprise. For weeks before it she despoiled the garden, keeping her plans miraculously secret, and storing her treasures away in a waste-basket, in lieu of the cornucopia. And then,

when the ladies were twittering away happily beneath, she stepped out upon her porch clad only in a Liberty scarf borrowed from her mother's wardrobe—the young creature in the picture confined itself to a ribony dress which floated charmingly about it—and discharged her flowers. She was prepared for astonishment in her audience, and her reception was all she could ask; but what she was not prepared for was the insidious decay which had set in among the blooms, and which robbed them entirely of their natural colour and fragrance, transforming them into a composition recognized by polite people only upon their lawns. It had been Mary's first encounter with the baffling thaumaturgy of chemistry; and to the end of her days her confidence in it was never wholly restored.

Henry Whitman at last finished his story and rose to go. The Dean, who was a genial soul, and who, with his generous embonpoint and his knickers, looked at present a little like Mr. Pickwick, regarded him affectionately. He had retired from the college two years before, but upon the President's departure for Europe on a six months' leave, he had been called from retirement to act in his place because of the great respect the College had for his temperate judgment, a quality at that time particularly useful in college affairs, stirred as they were by the contentions of the advocates of a larger Woodbridge. It was the Dean's duty to keep these malcontents, these radicals—some of whom were powerful—in their places. Quality not quantity had ever been the

Woodbridge cry, and it should remain so as long as he had any power. In other respects, however, he was as gentle as one could well be. In the matter of motoring, for example, he was so gentle that to the untutored eye he might seem almost timid. He had viewed the rise of the motor car with all the misgivings of a lover of the Old Ways, long refusing to accompany his wife on her hectic flights, but at last he had consented to buy an electric. For three dreadful weeks he ran it in agony or apprehension. It was not that he might run into people: there was no danger there, for even if he had bumped into some one, the damage would have been only very trifling. No, the terrible thought was what the reckless people might do who would crash into him. So at the end of the three weeks he abandoned the lever and, bringing Murdock in from the stable, definitely transformed him into his chauffeur. The picture that he presented was, he realized, somewhat sedate, but at least he was no longer taking foolhardy chances, and he could now, furthermore, see something as he went along. "When are you expecting Nancy?" he asked Henry.

"Oh, I supposed Mary had told you. Why, she is coming day after tomorrow. Henry Third is very much excited. He has been making a collection for her as a present. I didn't know anything about it until the other day when Annie told me. It seems that he has been very much impressed by a postal card from his Aunt Nancy showing a California orange grove, and so he has been collecting

orange pips ever since! He now has over ninety and he is afraid she will arrive before he can get a hundred. It seems to be a rule of the collection that his pips can only be taken from oranges he's eaten, and as he only gets one a day at his breakfast, there is no help for him."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, Henry, send him up here and I'll let him eat out his hundred," said Mary.

"Fine person you are," laughed Whitman, "ruining my son's good habits."

They had passed out into the hall when the bell rang violently two or three times.

"That must be mamma," said Mary, and going to the door, she opened it for a majestic lady who swept into the room, talking volubly as she began peeling off the shawls and capes in which she was wrapped.

"Why, Henry, dear, what on earth are you doing here? You never come to see us any more, and I am so anxious, too, to ask you all about the stabilized dollar and these new vitamines. Susan!" she called suddenly in the general direction of the upper floors. Then, addressing no one in particular, "I must find out about the salted almonds that the Dean asked for last night," and she started for the kitchen.

"I ordered them this morning, Gumgum, myself, when I was ordering everything else. I had them on my list."

"You did?" and Mrs. Norris burst into the most contagious laughter. "Tom, I wish you'd stop my

daughter calling me that horrid name. It's disgusting. I'm going to call her 'Snuffles.' "

"I really must go, Aunt Helen," said Whitman, starting for the door. The "Aunt" was a heritage of an earlier and more innocent day and not an indication of blood relationship. "Uncle Julian" had, however, been allowed to lapse, upon Henry's accession to the Woodbridge Faculty.

"Oh dear," replied Mrs. Norris. "Well, I'm coming down to see Nancy as soon as she gets back, and then you've got to come up here for dinner. It will be such a relief having her here for the party. And now," she added, putting her arm through Tom's, "I must have a little talk with Tom. I suspect he needs a pill, and I'm going to give it to him. Come here, Tommy, dear, and let me look at you," and she pulled him back into the library.

III

MRS. NORRIS was about to force Tom down upon the Bosom when her eye was caught by the cheque-book on the table. "Oh, land," she exclaimed, "why didn't I give Henry his cheque! I've owed him for those German Socialist books he got me for I don't know how long, and here I've forgotten to give it to him. I must send Susan after him with it right away," and going over to a bell by the fireplace, she pushed it until Susan appeared. Then, looking at Tom, with her sweetest smile she asked, in her quietest voice, "Why don't you like Henry?"

"Why, I don't mind Henry."

"Oh, come now, Tommy." She moved over to "her" chair under the yellow lamp and, picking up the knitting immediately set the needles flying and clicking over one another. "You know you can't bear him. He is a little cut and dried—that's the trouble with him, I think—but then, as far as I can make out, you people in the classics and literatures are just as bad."

"Oh, Mrs. Norris."

"You are too. You are perfectly dreadful. Why, I can remember as well as anything, old Professor Packard standing up before that fireplace and

saying, 'Helen,' says he, 'no gentleman is worthy the name who doesn't know his Horace.' 'Stuff,' says I, 'that's utter nonsense. You might as well say a gentlemen is not worthy of the name unless he knows his French for "fiddle-dee-dee"——like the Red Queen,' " and still knitting busily, she rocked with laughter.

Tom dropped into a chair beside her, threw one leg over the arm, and, pipe in hand, gazed at her affectionately. She was about the age his own mother would have been, he thought, in the immediate neighbourhood of sixty. But his own mother, who he knew had become reconciled to the life of Ephesus, could never have arrived at sixty with the imperious disregard for convention that was so perfectly Mrs. Norris's. Upon her face at present, as she looked down at her knitting, was a smiling benignity that would have recommended itself to the Virgin at Chartres; and at the same time her hair—what modest growth there was left—was uncurling itself from behind and threatening to pull down the whole structure after it. It was perfect, Tom told himself, and were he a sculptor commissioned to make her bust, he would do her just like that.

"Nancy, I sometimes think, is the worst person in the world to look after Henry. It's bad for her and bad for him. What he ought to do is to go out and get another wife and leave Nancy alone to do as she pleases. I have a good mind to take her with me to Athens next winter myself. What with Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee taking her to California

this winter and my taking her to Athens next, Henry will have to get married."

There had been rumours abroad lately that Henry had about arrived at the same conclusion himself and that Mary Norris was receiving serious consideration as a candidate, but there was nothing in Mrs. Norris's manner that suggested a knowledge of it, and Tom correctly concluded that it was just another of those idle rumours that live their luxurious day in Faculty Row.

"Oh, my no," said Tom, "that wouldn't do at all. Why, another marriage would completely upset Henry's System that he's always talking so much about. It's almost certain she couldn't stand it, you know, and then where would Henry be? Suppose, for example, that she forgot to have his senna tea for him at night or didn't care about playing cribbage for three-quarters of an hour after dinner? Now Nancy, apparently, gives perfect satisfaction. She adores little Henry and she manages the house so well that there isn't a single thing to bother big Henry. But they say—"

"Stop it, Tommy. You've been listening again to that horrid old Mrs. Conover. Her husband was a perfect old Scrooge, and now that she's rid of him, poor dear, she feels that she's got to expand and make up for lost time——" Her voice, which had become more and more drowsy, as if bored with what it had to say, trailed off and died. Then, with renewed interest, she exclaimed, "I wonder what they are going to do about Poland?"

Tom had learned that an answer to these startling questions and comments of Mrs. Norris was not required. There was no harm, however, in saying the first thing that came into one's head, as in a psychological test, and he accordingly now answered, "Paderewski."

"Yes," said Mrs. Norris quietly. Then brightening up: "How is your work going, Tommy?"

"Why, it's going pretty well."

"They get rather difficult about this time of year, don't they?"

"They do! Oh my, I've had an awful time with them lately. I've muffed Carlyle and Transcendentalism completely."

"Oh, no! Why that's Emerson and all those Concord people. Still, I suppose Louisa Alcott *is* getting a little old-fashioned."

"You should have seen the set of papers I got back today. There it was, all that I had given them, in great heavy undigested lumps—"

"Like footballs," suggested Mrs. Norris.

"Once I was funny with them," went on Tom, "and I may say that I was properly punished. They put it all down in their notebooks and then mixed it up with everything they shouldn't have mixed it up with—and I shall never be funny again."

"I shall give you *at least* two grains——"

"Then there are the young men who get off all the stale old facts and expect an A. One of them came to me yesterday, when I had given him a C, and whined around my desk until I finally told him I did

not consider his performance remarkable in a young man of eighteen, however much so it might be in a poll parrot of the same age."

"Now that was wrong. Were there other boys around?"

"Yes."

"Well, you simply must not go do that kind of thing. They'll hate it."

"I know it was wrong, but I am rather amused by it. As a matter of fact, I can stand anything but the ones who think they can fool me with a lot of embroidery and gas. They're insulting——"

"Why, Tommy, you were doing the same thing yourself only three or four years ago. You mustn't get so snufty so soon."

"Of course, at times when I've had a good recitation I wouldn't trade places with anyone. It's a kind of ecstasy. It's like all sorts of rushing, exciting things—like a high tide, or a close race, or a fire; really it is. Then you go to the other extreme and you ask yourself what on earth is the use of so futile a business, and what right has a young man with anything to him whatever to waste his time with it. Better go and make bird cages or hair nets or—or—hot water bags, and make some money. When I feel that way I sometimes go out along the ridge, just at dusk, you know, or into the woods—"

"You do? Why, I think that's awfully romantic of you; like Chateaubriand, you know." Then, dreamily, "He used to go out and lean on a pedestal and let the moon shine down on him through the

trees. I think Nancy is a little that way herself."

There was a pause, during which the young educator's difficulties were brushed aside.

"Do you realize that I haven't seen Nancy since leaving college?"

"Why, that's strange."

"No: you see she had left for the west before college opened in the fall, and I hadn't been back between then and the time I graduated. As a matter of fact, the last time I saw her was in this house. It was the night of our Senior Prom. I took Mary, you know, and Teddy Roberts took Nancy, and when it was over we came in here and had a cooky contest in the kitchen. Nancy could put a whole one of those gingersnaps you always have into her mouth without breaking it."

"Oh dear. I'm afraid she has the Billings mouth."

"We then got to talking about growing moustaches, and Nancy bet Teddy she could grow one before he could."

"How disgusting! That's what comes of all this emancipation. Marcus Aurelius has a lot to say about it. I must look that up. Did she win?"

"As I remember it, she was in a fair way to, but the war came along, and we left before it could be settled."

Mrs. Norris stopped knitting and looked at Tom with amused curiosity through her tortoise-shell spectacles, which had slid rather farther down her nose than usual. "I forget. Didn't you use to see

a good deal of Nancy at one time?" she asked.

"Only just here," he replied.

"Oh," said Mrs. Norris, and went on with her work.

At this point the Dean entered, dressed for dinner.

"Oh dear, I'm not ready at all," cried Mrs. Norris, jumping up; and her knitting, worsted, and bag spilled out upon the floor. "Tommy, tell Norah to put on a plate for you."

"I can't really, Mrs. Norris. This is Thursday night, you see, and I'm going around to the Club." Then as his hostess disappeared up the stairs, he hurried into his overcoat and, indulging in only a small fraction of his usual recessional with the Dean, he was gone.

Outside, walking down the long driveway that led to Tutors' Lane, Tom slowed his pace. Overhead, Betelgeuse was making the most of its recent publicity, unobstructed by vagrant clouds. Tom gazed up at it with a certain air of proprietorship. He had known Betelgeuse years ago and personally had always preferred its neighbour Rigel, which had received no publicity at all. As a small boy some one had given him a Handbook of the Stars, with diagrams of the constellations on one page and chatty notes about them opposite. He had lain on his back out in the fields, with opera glasses to sweep the heavens and a flashlight to sweep the diagrams until he had reconciled the two. This had been in the summer, and although his observations had extended to the autumn stars, the winter constellations

had suffered. Still, he knew the great ones and, weather permitting, he would gaze upon them and their neighbours with awe, the greater, perhaps, for his unfamiliarity with their diagrams.

Tom occasionally gave parlour lessons in astronomy, and he had given one to Nancy on the night of his Senior Prom, the night of the cooky contest. He had looked out and seen that the summer stars were up, and had spoken of it, to the boredom of Mary and Teddy Roberts. But Nancy wanted Scorpio pointed out, and from Scorpio they naturally progressed to the others until Nancy sneezed and the kitchen window had to be shut. Then, as it was getting light anyway and the waffles were ready, they stopped the lesson. Tom, however, with the true teacher's instinct, had sent her a copy of his Handbook af the Stars, and at his Training Camp he had received a note of thanks. It was the only note he had ever received from her, and he found it remarkable. She had thanked him without the barrage of gratitude usual among young ladies on such occasions. There had been something masculine in the directness of it, and yet there was no doubt that she had been pleased. In closing, she looked forward to seeing him back at Woodbridge when the war was over. There had been no fine writing about his Going to the Flag. Tom had been impressed by the amount left unsaid, and he had saved the letter until, in moving about, it had been lost. He was annoyed when he missed it, but on second thought he wondered if it were not just as

well. For, on later inspection, it might not have proved so remarkable, after all.

Well, the war was now over, and he was back at Woodbridge. It would be very pleasant indeed if she had gone ahead as she gave promise of doing; and why in the world shouldn't she? When he was in college Nancy had been admittedly the first of Woodbridge young ladies. To take her to a dance was to have the ultimate in good times, there was no need to worry about her getting "stuck," and in addition to the thrill of taking a popular girl one could enjoy all the advantages of a stag. One could flit from flower to flower until surfeited with beauty and then retire for a smoke or other innocent diversion without the haunting fear that possibly Dick or Bill was circling around and around in ever-deepening gloom with one's elected for the night. Nancy had permantly impressed herself upon the imagination of discerning Woodbridge youth, and it was hardly extravagant that Tom should look forward to her return.

Let it, therefore, without further evasion, be stated at once that he did look forward to her return.

IV

NANCY WHITMAN arrived at Woodbridge Center as planned, and her brother and nephew were at the station to meet her, the latter with his collection of ninety-six orange pips in a candy box.

In describing Juliet it will be remembered that the author said nothing about her colour or dimensions, but described her indirectly, and succeeding generations have had their attention called to the merit of the performance. We know, for example, that she taught the candles to burn bright, and, furthermore, that she seemed to hang upon the cheek of night like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—most probably a pearl. So, in describing Nancy, perhaps it would be effective to point out that the snow began thawing as soon as she arrived, that the motor which carried her home from the station purred along without the "knock" that had been troubling it, and that Tutors' Lane was less bumpy as they passed over it. But such a description, being dangerously near burlesque, however refined and genteel, must not be thought of for a moment in connection with a prominent resident of Tutors' Lane. It is something of a pity, nevertheless, that it must be given up, for Nancy was not particularly pretty, as young men nowadays

measure beauty, and were it possible, the truth might have been hidden. She was something too elfish—and then there was the Billings mouth already mentioned. Gertrude Ellis, who spent much of her time with her aunt in New York and who had a proper care for her person, thought it a ridiculous pose for Nancy not to have something done about her freckles. It was such a simple matter nowadays to have them removed that obviously only a poseuse would tolerate them. Still, men were so unobserving about things that they didn't seem to mind them at all, and Gertrude got nowhere when she once tried to discuss Nancy with a senior.

"Oh, Nancy is so wonderful that she could look like a leopard and people wouldn't care," he had said. "It's funny about her, isn't it? She's not good looking, and yet she's so nice everyone's crazy about her. You have to hand it to a girl that's like that."

Henry Third, or Harry, as everyone but his father called him, had immediately given his collection and been rewarded. He had on his best suit for the occasion and the tie his aunt had sent him on his seventh and latest birthday. He was a handsome, sturdy boy, and his father expected a Phi Beta Kappa key of him and an enthusiasm for Marx and John Stuart Mill. His aunt's plans were vague, but altogether different. At present she was inclined to favour the family business, with the understanding that when he was established at its head he should give a beautiful chapel with a Magdalen tower to

the College. His own goal was the Woodbridge football team and, after that, a locomotive on the run to New York.

They were met at the door by Annie, Harry's nurse, and by Clarence, Harry's Airedale. Clarence, who immediately dominated the scene, rendering Nancy's greeting to Annie vain and perfunctory, was a three-year-old with a frivolity of manner that ill became his senescent phiz. Upon its grizzled expanse there would pass in amazing succession the whole range of canine passion, rage, love, urbanity, shame, drollery, ennui, and, most frequent of all, curiosity. At present all his energy was devoted to expressing unmitigated pleasure, the dignity of which exhibition was continually being marred by sliding rugs. But it is almost certain that he didn't care a rap for his lost dignity. His mistress was back after an unconscionable absence, and there was every reason to believe in the reappearance of the superior brand of soup bones, a matter in which of late there had been too much indifference.

Nancy luxuriated in her renewed proprietorship of the old house, her home, and the home of her family even before the British officers seized it for their quarters in 1812. There was a hole to this day in the white pine panelling above the fireplace in the dining room, which, tradition held, had been made by a British bullet discharged after a discussion of the family port. She had found something depressing in the rococo civilization of Southern California. There was an insufficient appreciation of

Mr. Square's Eternal Fitness of Things. The spirit of Los Angeles, for example, was the same as that of the picnic party which, lunching on Ruskin's glacier, leaves its chicken bones and eggshells to offend all subsequent picnickers. At Woodbridge people did not make public messes of themselves. If they picnicked on a glacier they did up their eggshells in a neat package, which, in default of a handy bottomless pit, they took home with them and put in their garbage pails. That's the way nice people behaved, and what on earth was there to be gained by behaving otherwise?

So Nancy was glad to be home and see again the family things she had grown up with and loved. She was glad to see Henry, who appeared in his turn glad to see her; but her feelings upon being restored to her nephew were much deeper than either. Harry mattered more to her than any one-else in the world. Her mother, who had died five years ago, when Nancy was twenty, had been particularly devoted to him; and this would have been sufficient reason in itself for commending him to her tenderest care.

Such was the family that would have met the casual eye of a stranger: a young professor in extremely comfortably circumstances, with a brilliant future and an enviable son, living in a fine old house administered by a younger sister, the favourite daughter of the town. Beneath the surface, however, and unknown except to a few, was a conflict of

wills that only an exterior made up of strong family pride and respect for the established order could have withstood.

On the evening of the day on which Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee—the grandeur of whose name was never reduced by the omission of a single syllable—asked Nancy to go to California, Nancy had talked it over with Henry.

"It would be nice to go, for I haven't really been away since Mother died. I confess I'd like it, but she's not coming back until March, and that seems a long time to leave Harry and the house."

Henry had leisurely put his cigar into his mouth, had puffed luxuriously, and had then continued to gaze at his paper without saying anything.

Nancy hated this indifference, and she knew that Henry knew that she hated it. It was like his whistling. At times, when for some reason or other he wished to be disagreeable, he would start quietly whistling behind his paper, apparently for his sole enjoyment. It was as if, in view of the coldness of his audience, he were forced to express himself in a humble and subdued manner, but express himself he must. The tunes that he chose were The Rosary, The Miserere, Tosti's Good-bye, Gounod's Ave Maria. There would be an occasional lapse into the jazz song of the moment, and quite frequently a sacred number. The songs themselves exasperated her, but what was unbearable were the trills and improvised fireworks. She would leave the

room thoroughly angry, and would fancy that as she ascended the stairs the tune swelled slightly and acquired even more airs and graces.

So now, as he deliberately smoked his cigar without noticing her, her anger rose. He was so smug, so self-sufficient—she wanted to stick a pin into him.

"It isn't, of course, as if the house were not in capable hands," she went on, "for Katie and Julia are perfectly responsible, and Annie couldn't be better." Henry put down his paper, blew a cloud of smoke, and, looking blandly at her, twisted his mouth so that he might enjoy the luxury of biting his cheek.

"Well?" burst out Nancy. "I don't see why you need be so irritating about it?"

"Why, don't be foolish," he replied with an amused smile; "do just what you want, of course." To Nancy, the smile spoke a great deal more. "How fatuous you are," it said, "with your devotion to my son and to me. Let a lollypop in the way of a trip to California come along, and away you go as if you didn't have a responsibility in the world. There's a firm nature for you."

She had fled to Mrs. Norris, as always in an emergency, and, receiving reassuring words, she had gone, but not without tears and misgiving and not without an unforgettable memory of Henry's behaviour.

She had frankly discussed her Henry Problem with Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee. "I can't seem to

reach any middle ground with him," she had said. "Either I feel terribly because things go so wrong, so much worse than when Mother was alive, or else I am furious with him. Then I am overwhelmed with mortification and make up my mind that I *will* get on with him, no matter what happens. And of course he can be perfectly lovely when he wants to be—and then he will deliberately go and do some horrid thing which makes me want to go away and —drive an auto stage, or something."

As a matter of fact Nancy would on these occasions, retire and invest herself in some such romantic, emancipated, rôle. Possibly she would be a great surgeon. Having gone through her preliminary training with unprecedented speed, she had established herself as a famous specialist—of the brain. People who had gone wrong in their heads would be brought to her by their desperate friends and relatives. If she only would help them out. She did usually, although heaven knew that she was but one little woman to so many brains, and as she worked chiefly under God's guidance, anyway, she had to conserve her strength. However, she operated steadily from eight in the morning until eight at night with only a light lunch in between—possibly only a water cracker. She saw herself in the operating room with her rubber gloves and her knives. There was a hazy cloud of white-robed nurses and distinguished surgeons who, attracted from all over the world, had come to see her miracles for themselves. A form was on the table, with head shaved.

She was to go into his cerebellum and take out a tumor which had caused deafness, dumbness, and blindness. She would probably have to make two hundred stitches or more in sewing him up, but she always had been good at needlework, and it gave her no concern. She picked up her saw—but to her horror she found she couldn't bear to stick it in!

Or she was a famous lawyer, strongly reminiscent of Portia, specializing in pleading for widows and orphans. She had a secretary to handle her correspondence, who explained that as Miss Whitman was able to work chiefly by the grace of God—her health was none too robust, and it was necessary for her to put her trust in Him—it really was not fair of them to expect her to handle their cases. However, the most outrageous ones she passed on to Nancy and it was by them that Nancy made her great reputation. Of course she took no fees, but as body and soul had to be kept together and the secretary's salary paid, she wrote syndicated articles for the papers, on religious and ethical subjects. Naturally she was an object of interest and curiosity and people thronged the court room when she pleaded. They saw a quiet woman, dressed in black, but when she began speaking you could hear a pin drop. There was a thrilling quality in her voice, much remarked by the press, and big lawyers pitted against her had been known to break down and weep, to the confusion of their clients. The judge—it was always the same one—had a big bushy beard, and, though of fierce and impartial mien at the beginning of the proceed-

ings, he had been known time and again, as her address continued, to draw forth his large silk handkerchief and blubber into it. The gratitude of the widows—who extended in a long, black line, leading their army of white-faced little boys, looking strangely like Harry when he had the croup—was the one thing that she could not stand. She would not see them when it was all over, but she couldn't keep them from sending her flowers, and accordingly her apartment was always a bower.

So mighty would these scenes be, so moving, and so pathetic, that Nancy would emerge entirely at peace with Henry and the world. They dwarfed the cause of her anger; they left her calm and serene, a cousin to the Superwoman.

The first evening at home passed off very pleasantly indeed. Henry was charmingly interested in the details of her trip, and the usual cribbage session was doubled. Harry's progress at school and through the mumps—an illness which had torn his aunt—were duly recounted and the maids given a good bill of health. The state of Henry's classes was described at some length. They were slightly better than usual, it appeared, and his special course in Labour Problems was going perfectly. It was really making him famous, he told Nancy.

That night in her room, as she sat at her desk writing her diary, she calmly told herself that the present tranquillity should last. She solemnly resolved to guard against every possible contingency

that might lead to a "situation." She did not purpose to surrender her individuality; she would not become a dummy. But there *must* be a middle ground where she could blend service to herself with service to her family. Life should be rich, but it ought also to be tactful. Surely this was not an impossible union. Very well, then, she would live richly and tactfully.

Just exactly what she meant by living richly she didn't quite know. It would doubtless be somewhat clearer in the morning when she wasn't so sleepy. Americanization work in Whitmanville. That seemed to offer rich possibilities. There must be room for endless Uplift in Whitmanville. And what could be richer than Uplift? She would start a school, she thought, as she turned off the light and climbed into her four-poster. She would teach the women how to take care of their babies and the men how to take care of their women. But it must all be done tactfully. She must be eternally vigilant upon that score. Yet not so tactful as to become less rich. Nor yet so rich as to become less tactful. . . . Tact and riches—riches and tacks—tracts—striches—. . . .

V

THE night following Nancy's return was the night of the Norris party, the party which is to Woodbridge what the Mardi Gras is to New Orleans, the Carnival to Rome, and what the Feast of the Ygquato Bloom was to the ancient Aztecs. It is always held on the twenty-first of March, Sunday of course excepted, and it is known as the Vernal. Not to be seen at it is too bad. Not to be invited—unlike the lupercals before mentioned it requires invitations—is a blight mercifully spared all but the most painfully outré. Of these the Coogans, who live in Center and whose connubial infelicities are proverbial, are an example. Tradespeople frequently bear witness to the marks of a man's fingers on Mrs. Coogan's fair—and by no means insignificant—arm, and it is common property that she drinks paregoric. It is quite clear, of course, that such people can not expect to be invited.

The Vernal has always been "different." In the old days Mrs. Norris set her face against dancing, not upon any moral grounds, certainly, but because of its alleged dullness. Why couldn't people enjoy one another without flying into a perspiration? she asked; but, unfortunately for her plans for the establishment of an animated conversazione, the sub-

stitutes she had advocated were felt to be even duller. So, one by one, all her nice games were abandoned and only the charade is left. This however has gained in popularity, if anything, and certainly it has gained paraphernalia. Mrs. Norris's costume box has overflowed into a trunk, and from the trunk has spread into a closet, and the closet is now nearly filled. From this treasure the two captains select their colleagues' wardrobes, a duty discharged in advance of the performance by way of ensuring enough professionalism to prevent the party's collapsing at the start. In other words, Mrs. Norris, although luckless in the matter of "adverbs," memory contests, and backgammon tourneys, has established charades.

It used to be a masquerade party, but because of certain unhappy circumstances which have recently befallen, it was decided this year to do without the masks and "Fancy dress." For the last few years people have been complaining a little of the necessity of getting something new each year. Mrs. Bates, for example, has exhausted the possibilities of her husband's summer bath robe. It served excellently at first as a Roman toga, and the next year it did well enough for Mephistopheles. By cutting away the parts ravaged by moths it passed as a pirate, but she despairs of any further alteration. Then, too, it would always be remembered that a stranger at the last Vernal had in all seriousness reproved old Professor Narbo, the Chemist, for not taking off his funny old mask when he already

had done so, a mishap none the less enjoyed because the bringing of a similar charge to one's friends has been an inevitable jest among the wags for generations. Professor Narbo had been offended, and great is the offendedness of a Full Professor, particularly when he is a Heidelberg Ph.D. and parts his hair all the way down the back. The stranger had been crushed; and, all in all, it was as mortifying an affair as one could well imagine, and one which in itself would have been enough to do away with the masks—a long-discussed possibility—had not worse followed. Edgar Stebbins, Assistant Professor of History, was unfortunately a little too warmly devoted to the memory of the grape, or, more specifically, of the corn. Being mildly mellowed by something more than the memory of it, he found occasion to embrace a lady who was dressed in his period, the Late Roman, and to whom he was naturally drawn. The lady promptly screamed and unmasked; and the situation was not at all improved by its being discovered that she was the wife of Professor Robbins of the Latin Department, with which gentleman Mr. Stebbins was not on speaking terms. Mrs. Robbins, it seemed, had employed the squeaky voice so familiar at masquerade parties and had thus rendered her disguise complete. Upon her testimony it was learned that Mr. Stebbins's voice had been so roughened by drink that his own mother wouldn't have recognized it. Mr. Stebbins had withdrawn from the party and, at the end of the academic year, from the college as

well, and his name is now only an appalling memory.

In the morning Nancy hurried up to the Norrises' as soon as she could. She found Mary and her mother in the drawing-room. Mary was playing the piano while her mother sat in a distant chair, amiably shredding codfish, a pleasure which she would on no account yield to the kitchen.

As soon as the rush of sisterly greeting was passed, all four—for the cod could not be left behind—repaired to the sofa in the library; and after the gaps in their correspondence had been filled, they came to the party. Mary was to be one of the charade captains and Tom Reynolds the other. Nancy, who was an inevitable member of the charade, was to be on Tom's side.

"Tell me," she asked, "is he really as nice as you people make out?"

"Oh yes," replied Mary, "he's one of us."

"He used to scare me. He never would dance with me any more than he had to, and I always was afraid he would get that terribly bored look I've seen him get. I think probably he's conceited."

"Oh dear, to hear you girls talk you'd think that a little honest boredom was the most dreadful thing on earth. Why, your fathers used to get so bored with us that——"

"Now, Gumgum, you know that isn't sensible," broke in Mary severely—a regrettable habit which seems increasingly prevalent among our modern daughters—"unless you people were ninnies."

"That was in Garfield's administration," replied

Mrs. Norris absently, "or possibly a little before, in Hayes's—Rutherford B. Hayes. He did away with the carpetbaggers and all those dreadful people in the South." Then, more dreamily still, "His middle name was Birchard."

"I know why you think he's conceited," Mary went on, warming up to the never-ending pleasure of analysis, "but it's because he's really diffident. Lots of people I know who people think are snobby are only just diffident."

"What on earth do you mean by saying that Rutherford Hayes was diffident? He wasn't a bit. He was a very great philanthropist."

"She's too awful today," exclaimed Mary, "with that smelly old fish and Rutherford Garfield. Gracious, I'd like to bury the old thing."

"You horrid, ungrateful child, when I'm doing this for your lunch. We're just old Its, we mothers. I'm going to start an Emancipation Club for Mothers. The poor old things, they might just as well crawl away into the bushes like rabbits."

There then followed a tender passage between mother and daughter, which ended in Mary's blowing down her mother's neck. A convulsive scream and a frantic clawing gesture in the direction of her daughter was the immediate reaction, much to the confusion of the codfish, which was only just saved by Nancy from a premature end upon the hearth.

Following the rescue, the heroine, who had some shopping to do, began making motions of departure. "You must come as soon so you can after dinner

to have Tom explain what you are to do. Gum-gum thinks we ought to have a rehearsal, but Tom has a five o'clock, and I don't think it's necessary anyway. He's really awfully funny and clever, Nancy, and you must like him."

"I hate clever people. I have nothing to say to them. I'm a perfect gawk when they're around, and I'm afraid I won't be able to stand him."

As she walked on down to Center, however, it occurred to her that he might come in useful with the children of the parents in her Whitmanville school. He could teach them basketball and of course he could coach their baseball team. He would also be useful in taking them off on hikes and— But she hadn't seen him in ever so long, and he might not do at all. In fact, it was highly probable that he wouldn't do, for boys are suspicious of clever people, and he almost certainly wouldn't think of doing it. Or possibly he might, out of politeness, and then when he got bored with it he would decide to be funny with the boys, and they would get to hate him and tell their parents, who would come to her with sullen looks and threatening gestures and——

When Nancy arrived in the evening, she found Tom distributing costumes. He was heavier, she noticed, and his forehead was higher. Some day she might get a chance to tell him how she saved Henry's hair simply by brushing it carefully. It was ridiculous to put a lot of smelly greasy stuff on it——

She had shaken hands with him and received her costume which was an aigrette and a peacock-feather fan. "The word is 'draper,' " explained Tom, "and you are to be the Lady Angela. In the first syllable you have lost your pet Persian and, after explaining your loss to the little house-maid who is dusting around, you call in Merriam the detective. I am Merriam the detective and I arrive immediately after you are through calling me up on the telephone. The little maid goes over to the window and says, 'Goody, here comes Mr. Merriam the detective in a dray,' and then you go out to meet me, and that's the first act. Then I come on alone in the second act and investigate the room heavily, looking for a clue, you see. I have a theory that the little maid is the thief, and when you come in, as you do when I have said 'Ha, it is a match box,' I explain to you that——"

"Oh, dear, I haven't any idea what I'm to do."

"Well, you just go in and wave your fan disconsolately, and I'll do the rest. It will be dreadful, of course, but then, no one ever expects them to be otherwise. Now I think the best way is for us to run over it, and then little things will come to you."

VI

DOWNSTAIRS the Dean and Mrs. Norris had begun receiving their guests, most of the receiving being done by the Dean. His wife, whose trail was like that of a runaway astral body, was here, there, and everywhere, calling, ordering, laughing.

The Misses Forbes, invariably the first comers, had taken possession of front-row seats. This year Miss Edith had the Burnham lace—an heirloom whose glory could on no account be dimmed by a tri-partite division—and Miss Annie had the Burnham pearls. They were a modest string, perhaps, but they lived on after more spectacular ones became gummy. As for Miss Jennie, the youngest, aged sixty-five, she was something of a philosopher, being the community's sole theosophist, and she regarded her sisters' pleasure in their baubles with amusement. Nor could she be drawn into a discussion of their ultimate disposition, a nice problem, for other Burnhams and Forbeses were there none. "Why not give them to the museum?" she had once suggested, to the sorrow of her sisters, who hated to see her cynical side. Worse than that, she was a radical and had boldly come out for the open shop, or the closed shop, whichever was the radical one,

and she talked very wildly indeed of Unions and Compensation Bills.

Miss Elfrida Balch had arrived, and likewise her brother, the artist. Miss Balch was a lady of almost crystalline refinement. She was tall and fair, with a delicacy of complexion that stood in no need of retailed bloom. She might have passed for the daughter of a kindly old Saxon chieftain—it was, indeed, generally known that she sprang from the seed of Saxon kings—who, firm in the belief that no young man was her equal in birth or behaviour, had insisted upon her declining into a spinsterhood which increased in refinement as it did in service. Sentimental persons held that she came by that manner from association with Art in her brother's studio. Others, of a more sardonic turn, said that her manner was that of one who continually smelled a bad smell, and that if she got it by looking at her brother's pictures they didn't wonder.

Leofwin Balch was not a personable gentleman. The early Saxon strain in him had taken the form of obesity, a tendency not confined, if we may trust the evidence of scholars, to descendants of Saxon kings. To those who had little sympathy with genius in its more alarming shapes, his fair chin whisker seemed an absurdity. The more discriminating, however, welcomed it. Anything might be expected of a man with a chin whisker which some one, with more imagination than restraint, had described as an "attenuated shredded wheat biscuit seen through a glass darkly." Leofwin's work had of

late years suffered on account of a rheumatism which defied medicine. He had sacrificed his tonsils and nine teeth upon the altar of Art with little or no relief, and it was now feared by those closest to him, his sister and himself, that he would never again approach the promise given in his "Willows." "Willows" had received an honourable mention at the Exhibition—just which Exhibition, was a subject of controversy among the uninitiated—and had been purchased by a rich baronet in Suffolk. The Balches had seen it in his gallery, and it had become an open secret that hanging in the same room were a Constable and a John Opie.

Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee had arrived and was already with a group of the great around her chair. She was wearing the famous Lee-Satterlee dog collar, and her hair had been carefully dressed for the occasion. Such items alone would have borne witness to the importance of the Vernal, had she not in addition chosen to carry the Court fan. This fan, which was known as the "Court fan" to distinguish it from all other fans in the world, had been given her by the Court ladies when she and her husband, the late Ambassador, had departed upon the arrival of the new Administration's appointee. Its sticks were mother-of-pearl, encrusted with diamonds, and on its silk was the cruel story of Pyramus and Thisbe set forth in brilliant colours, but in what wondrous manner no one quite knew. For it was true that Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee had walked with kings, danced with dukes, and played croquet with counts, and it

was therefore inevitable that she should be regarded as the Empress of Woodbridge. She would have been considered so quite apart from the fact that she had great possessions—in addition to the Court fan and the dog collar—possessions which were commonly supposed to be destined for the college, the Lee-Satterlees having no issue. Accordingly, Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee was allowed liberties unthinkable in another; but, be it said to her credit, she never abused them. Since she, or at least her property, was to take such an active part in Woodbridge affairs when she passed into the next world, it was only reasonable that she should take an active part while she was still in this; and it is safe to say that no one knew more about college affairs than she. Still, no one ever thought of calling her a nuisance. When, occasionally, she did quietly suggest that possibly such-and-such a course might be a wise one or that such-and-such a man might be the one to appoint to such-and-such a vacancy, it would be discovered that, with singular insight, she had made a perfect suggestion. Whereas, therefore, it might be said that she was a despot, it was universally agreed that she was a benevolent one and an enlightened one, and many even went so far as to fear that her death might actually prove a loss.

The library was filling fast. Mrs. Norris, casting a rather wild eye into it occasionally, would perhaps signal out an individual for a mission that somehow in the general run of things could not conceivably be completed. For example, her eye, on

one of these expeditions, happened to alight on a gentleman of the Physics Department, a gentleman with a gold tooth and a loud laugh, who represented a somewhat larger group of instructors than the best Tutors' Lane families cared to acknowledge. The gentleman responded with an alacrity that did him credit, nor did he quail before the steady gaze of Mrs. Norris, which seemed to wonder if she hadn't been a little unwise in placing such trust in so uninteresting a vessel. She asked him, however, to see if the musicians had found a good place to put their hats and coats, and as there were several musicians, some of whom had not arrived, he was not restored to his nervous and too friendly mate until the charades were over.

And now there was a suggestive flutter in the Dean's study, behind whose large folding doors the charades were to be acted. Gentlemen who were standing urbanely about moved into corners, with smiles calculated to impress all with their self-possession in even the first houses. The doors rolled open and a buzz of admiration greeted the *distraite* Lady Angela, whose return from California had been acknowledged by but few of the audience. She went through her scene with the little maid, and when the doors were bumped together, Mr. Grimes of the Romance Languages, a noted success at anagrams, acrostics, and charades, announced, "Dray." After a few minutes the second act was done, in which it appeared that Mr. Merriam the detective had fallen madly in love with Lady Angela. In the midst of

the scene the little maid was heard purring loudly off-stage, a purring which was explained by both lovers as the purring of the lost Persian. Mr. Grimes guessed "Purr" loudly at the close, and the final syllable, in which Mr. Merriam appeared disguised as a draper, was thus rendered stale and perfunctory. Mary's charade eluded Mr. Grimes's wit no more successfully, and the music was received with even more enthusiasm than usual.

The Lady Angela, as a matter of fact, had been considerably flustered by the ardour of Merriam the detective's wooing. The rehearsal had not prepared her for anything so realistic, and she was annoyed. Art was art, of course, but she was no Duse, and she didn't care to be the object of such public passion. The fact that she was obliged to reciprocate his sentiments instead of slapping his face was also trying. Well, there was no reason to conceal her displeasure now; and when she found herself again in his arms—they were rather strong arms, incidentally, and he did dance well—she had little to say to him.

It was not, fortunately, necessary for her to do a great deal of dancing, because of the visiting she naturally owed to her elderly friends, and once when Tom cut in she left him, excusing herself on the ground of having to see the Dean and Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee, his time-honoured bridge partner. The Dean took his bridge seriously and with extreme deliberation. Henry Whitman, on the other hand, who was one of his opponents, played with a rapidity amounting at times to frenzy, and he was

fidgeted by anyone of more sober pace. His partner, old Mrs. Conover, in a cap with violet insertion, had some little difficulty in telling kings from jacks and hearts from spades and was inclined, furthermore, to be forgetful of the trump. Accordingly, Nancy remarked beneath her brother's rather terrible calm all these symptoms of a whistling bee when they were again at home.

The Dean was halfway through a hand and was trying to choose a card from the dummy. He at length carefully lifted the king of spades from it as if it weighed a ton, and then, after looking at it soberly, put it back and scowled at his own hand. Henry, who had his card ready to throw down upon the table, slid it back into his hand with the look of resignation that has tranquillized our memories of the Early Christian Martyrs. The Dean rested his eye on the tempting king in the dummy and pursed his lips. He *would do* it. Then he leaned over and played it with the air of a man who lays all in the lap of the gods. Mrs. Conover, who had been shuffling her cards around in ill-suppressed excitement, popped out a trump with a cry of triumph just as Henry's Ace of Spades covered the king. A dreadful scene followed. The Dean was all gallantry, Mrs. Conover all self-reproach, Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee all charm, and Henry all exasperation; and when, later in the same hand, his mind torn with the memory of his lost ace, he made a revoke and was quietly brought to account by the Dean, Nancy discreetly withdrew.

Tom, who had seen her at the table with three people whom she met constantly and upon whom she hardly needed to make a call, felt decidedly snubbed. Was she, after all, so much a Whitman that she felt no need to obey the ordinary rules of decency? It seemed too bad, for his impression of her earlier in the evening had been decidedly different.

Tom had sometimes wondered about love at first sight. What was it anyway? How did one feel? Was it like a blow between the eyes, a ball in the breast? Did one stagger and have to lie down, with a pulse coursing up to one hundred and five? What was it? When Tom first looked at Nancy in the costume closet he wondered if he were to be brought face to face with the answer. Certainly, little hints by the Norrises and Old Mrs. Conover would have put the idea into his head, had it not in the natural course of events found its way there unaided.

And now Nancy had made it clear that she did not care to have anything to do with him. It was, he guessed, because of the too tender passage in the charade. He pictured himself arguing with her. "It is ridiculous to object to me because I played the part well. Would you have had me a stick and make the thing even more of a bore?" "No," coldly, "but you didn't have to have that part in it." "Well, it made it more interesting, and, besides, if you think that I put it in just for an excuse to put my arm around you, you're entirely mistaken and not the girl I thought you." This last thrust, which, in

less skilful hands might have become mere petulance, was delivered with a rolling deliberation that would have wrung a Jezebel. Tom always did well in these conversations, but unfortunately, the present situation was not solved so easily. Nancy, he had found, was even more attractive than she had been when he was in college. They would, of course, see something of each other from time to time, and it would be tiresome not to be friendly. Besides, he guessed that she would be helpful in discussing his various problems. Mrs. Norris was splendid, of course, and he loved her dearly, but he found himeslf occasionally wishing for a somewhat younger listener and one not given over to quite so many nonsequiturs. Nancy seemed excellent material, but if she were going to be superior— Possibly it was because of Ephesus and the Reynolds Dry Goods Store. He turned away with a slightly bilious feeling. If it should prove that she was affected by that, then indeed would he be disappointed in her.

He crossed the hall into the drawing-room, where a dozen or so couples were dancing in various stages of æsthetic intoxication. The saxophone and the violin were engaging in a pantomime calculated to add gaiety to the waning enthusiasm of the party, and he gazed at them in disgust. A young lady with hair newly hennaed and face suggestive of an overripe pear ogled him over her partner's elbow as they jazzed by. Let her dance on until she got so sick of him she was ready to scream, was Tom's thought,

In one corner, obviously having a poor time, was Leofwin Balch. Tom sat down beside him.

"It's too hot in here, don't you think?" he asked.

"Much," replied Leofwin. "I think these parties get worse every year." These were soothing words. "Particularly those damned charades," he went on. "Now, my dear fellow, you know perfectly well that yours was a miserable failure."

Tom found this a little trying. It was true that no one could be more deprecating of his effort than he, but, privately, he had a somewhat better opinion of it. As charades went, he thought it decidedly above the average; and the way he had examined the room, after the manner of Mr. William Gillette, and come upon the match box was proved amusing by the laugh it had brought.

"Granted," he replied, with a shade of sarcasm, "it was a miserable failure."

"Why, the way you made love to Miss Whitman was disgusting."

Tom flushed. Had he really been as bad as that? Had he really just missed being put out of the house like that clown Stebbins? Were they all now, all these people sitting around so innocently in groups, were they all blasting his name as a cheap cad? "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Why, you went at it like a puling babe. Why didn't you put some fire into it—kiss her feet or bite her neck? Then you would have made us sit up and take notice. You college people are a lot of old women, anyway."

Tom, with bounding relief, started to confess the apparent inability of most college people to bite ladies in the neck, when he observed a startling change in his companion. From the passionate leprecaune of the moment before he had become even as a little child. His hand, which was resting elegantly on the arm chair, stole up into his chin whisker, amid which it wistfully strayed. There crept into his Saxon eyes that light of resigned suffering which inspires such exquisite anguish in the friends of Black Beauty and Beautiful Joe. In short, his entire being proclaimed to all who would but look, a great quiet man in love. Tom's eyes followed his and rested upon—Nancy! He rose in disgust and, walking away, suddenly came face to face with her. Then, without thinking of his resolve to let her severely alone, he reached out his hand and cut in.

What a fool he was! Obviously she didn't want to dance with him, and here he was forcing himself upon her. It made him look so common, so pushing, so like an Ephesus drygoods clerk. Some one barged into him, surged into him, from the rear, causing him to stumble. "Sorry," he muttered. They started on, just out of step. He tried to get into step by speeding up, and their knees bumped together. Would no one ever cut in? Then the music stopped, and it appeared that the musicians were going to rest for a few minutes.

"Let's sit down, shall we?" said Nancy. They settled themselves upon two gilt chairs with spindly

legs. "Do you like your work here?" she asked pleasantly."

What a very dull question! An expletive exploded inside Tom's head. "Oh, yes," he said. Then after a heavy pause, "How are you getting on with the stars?"

"Oh, I learned the diagrams in that nice little book you sent me, but I'm afraid I've forgotten most of them now. I feel rather superior about Betelgeuse, though."

"So do I. We might start a Betelguese Club."

"What would we do at it?"

"Oh, read papers. With Betelguese's power behind us we might do all sorts of things—have picnics and read tracts to the poor. When you see only college people, after a while you crave being illiterate, and I've thought recently that I'd like to enlist in the Navy or move to Alaska, or go over and work in the Mills. I'd buy a black shirt to work in and use a bandana—when I used anything—and take the nice extra room my laundress has in Whitmanville. She says her clothesline goes out fifty feet, and they have a phonograph. Don't you think that would be more attractive than trying to teach a lot of Freshmen Carlyle and Hawthorne?"

"Lots, and there would be ever so much more money in it."

"It would be a kind of social service work, wouldn't it? 'Woodbridge Professor Slaves in Mill

to Earn Bread.' That would go big, all over the country."

"Do you know, I've thought a little of doing some social work, seriously. I don't know anything about it, of course, but it has occurred to me that if I could get a group of people together we might have one of the Physiologist instructors give us some lectures. You see, the first thing in social work must be the health of the people, and I should think a good grounding in the fundamentals would be essential. As soon as we have their interest in their personal welfare we can get them to playing basketball, brushing their teeth, putting screens in their windows, and—so on. Naturally I don't know much about it, but it would seem as though there were a great opportunity for somebody."

"Conditions in the town, on the west side, aren't too good."

"Of course they're not. I have let my mind run on at a great rate about it, but I don't see why, if the right person got hold of it, the whole town couldn't be improved, made into a model mill town, you know—with playgrounds, and crèches, and—" Again other model features failed her.

"Well, why aren't you the proper person? I should think you could do it if anyone could. Your uncle would have to listen to you, and he probably would be all for it."

"Oh, Uncle Rob is just as nice as he can be—but I couldn't do it all alone."

"Well, now of course we have got into this thing

pretty quickly, but I assure you I should like nothing better than to do something about it with you. After all, what is education in the finest sense, but the uplifting of the masses? You probably will want to think it over a little more before going ahead, but, really, I hope you will, and I hope you will let me join you."

"There is no time like the present. Why dilly-dally? We both realize that this is a crying need. Then why not do something about it? If you will find out who is the best man for us, I'll provide the rest."

At this point the musicians swung into Home Sweet Home, and Mrs. Norris hurried up to the embryonic workers. "The party is over now, my dears, and please help by going and getting your things. It's this awful standing around saying good-bye that is so trying," and with an emphatic push of her back comb she began hauling tables and chairs back into their normal places.

Tom had only just time to assure Nancy that he would do his part when Mrs. Norris called to him again to help her with the dining-room rug; and with a quick handshake and a pleasanter nod than he would have thought could possibly have come to him half an hour before, Nancy Whitman was gone.

VII

IN the morning Nancy's thoughts flew to the proposed social work. What on earth had she got herself into! Swept away, as usual, she had confided her plans for a life of service to a man she barely knew, one hour after she had decided to leave him alone! Well, there was nothing to do now but make the best of it. Their talk had, as a matter of fact, shown that she had been a little silly about the charade. He had unsuspected depth. That had been made clear by his conversation about education, and it was unlikely that anyone who felt as strongly as he did could be wayward in a charade. So it might turn out all right, after all, and she had better set about getting the workers.

Mary, to her surprise, was a disappointment. It seemed that with her music, which she was studying seriously this year, with weekly trips to Boston for a lesson, she had no time. Others of her friends to whom she had naturally turned were unavailable for one reason or another, and the affair began to look discouraging. On the fourth day, however, while calling upon the Misses Forbes, she got an unsolicited recruit. Her mind being full of the idea, she was talking about it before she knew it;

and to her astonishment, and a little to her dismay, Miss Jennie offered her services. "I cannot," she said, "talk to the operatives about their bodies, and, accordingly, it won't be necessary for me to attend the physiological lectures, but I think I can be of use later on. When we went to Miss Northcote's School we learned to weave mats and paint on china, and I can give instructions in them. In their turn they will instruct me, for I shall learn much about Housing Conditions and have an opportunity to examine at first hand the various industrial problems of the day. Who knows? when we are through, I may prepare a paper for the *Nation*." Her sisters indicated their disapproval by rocking hopelessly.

Tom, too, had met with difficulties. Upon thinking the matter over he had little doubt as to its outcome. Enough of his Ephesus life remained with him to tell him that factory hands are not to be reached by lectures from academic ladies and gentlemen. He blushed, too, for certain sentiments he had expressed upon the essence of education, but they might be credited to the delicate frenzy of the dance and his unexpected reconciliation. It was, of course, all Nancy. He could not imagine himself proceeding upon such an affair with anyone else. Still, he found it necessary to placate his conscience for the time taken from the study of Beowulf which he was then making for his PH.D. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" seemed, after a somewhat desperate search, as sound a principle as any;

and, furthermore, he would save time from his exercise by running around the cemetery—the classic running course—instead of playing squash at the Country Club. So that problem was settled.

The young physiologist, however, upon whom he had been counting had developed appendicitis, and he didn't feel that he knew any of the other men in the department well enough to take their time for such a speculative cause. Then he met old Professor Sprig, a Star man of '65, who had been a celebrated physiologist in his time and who was now an almost equally celebrated eccentric. Having complained of the present status of the department and explained his problem, Tom was invited by the old gentleman to bring Nancy to his rooms. "You know, I suppose, where I live?" he asked with a crafty smile.

Tom did know where he lived. The old four-story frame building in Whitmanville, the Diamond Building, the highest in the town, had been made famous by his residence. The top floor was said to be his apartment and it was commonly supposed that he kept chickens in it. There were some dreadful stories about midnight dissections, but cooler heads affirmed that if there were any chickens there at all, they were there as the companions and not as the helpless victims of a debauched old age. And now the two social workers were invited into these mysterious precincts! The news might swell the ros-

ter to disconcerting proportions. They should have to proceed with caution.

"All we want, sir, is a most elementary discussion. Just enough so we can give the men and women in the Mills some simple facts about themselves. Then, with that as a starter, we can build up more intelligently."

"I shall be glad to give you whatever you want. Shall we say Tuesday next? At eight o'clock? Don't dress, you know. Just come as you are. This is business," and with another of his sly smiles he moved on down the street.

When Tom called for Nancy on Tuesday night he found her equipped with pad and pencils.

"Henry doesn't think too highly of this performance, I may say," she said, smiling up at him, "but we simply couldn't have let people know where we are going. They would have swamped the whole thing. I must say I am a little afraid." She slipped her arm through his, and they hurried on down Division Street, which connects Tutors' Lane with Whitmanville. "If he only has chickens, I won't mind, but if he has bats I shall hate it. I confess I'm a perfect fool about bats. They're loathsome. What they really are, are hairy rats with wings like web feet, and they have the most *loathsome* mouths."

Tom was curiously excited. He felt buoyed up. It was like water-wings, he told himself. And when he tried afterwards to think of the things he had

said, he could remember nothing except that he had quoted Alice's perplexity about bats eating cats when she was falling down the well, and that they had both laughed immoderately.

The Diamond Building, on their arrival, presented a somewhat portentous picture. A Five, Ten, and Fifteen Cent store dimly showed forth strings of penny postal cards and piles of dusty candy in its macabre windows. The second floor was throbbing with the rich life of a poolhall, and as they passed the Christian Science rooms on the third floor they carried with them the strains of a therapeutic hymn. And then, at last, they were before a door which bore over its bell the pencilled legend, H. Sprig.

They were admitted by a flunkey named Herbert. Herbert's period of usefulness in the laboratory had terminated with that of the Professor, and the latter had engaged him as a body servant, not only because of his proved capacity and loyalty, but because of the unusual shape of his head, upon which the Professor found it restful to gaze. He was black, was Herbert, and was at present clothed in gorgeous blue livery with gold buttons. He bowed the guests inside and led them through a narrow hallway to a comfortable room of generous size, the Professor's library. At one end was a long table, and behind it was Mr. Sprig, clad in a morning coat. Behind him on the walls were half a dozen diagrams of Man the Master, designed to gratify students whose thirst was for the anatomical. Before Mr.

Sprig were a pitcher of iced water, a tumbler, and a sheaf of notes.

Mr. Sprig rose as Nancy and Tom entered and bowed pleasantly, at the same time waving them to two chairs placed close together before his table. When they had seated themselves he bowed again, and, without more ado, began an address. He spoke in a low, deep, if somewhat quavery voice, and with an elegant ease of manner. It was his purpose, he explained, to give them an elementary course in the primary systems of the body, together with two supplementary lectures on hygiene, in order that they might go out and instruct the poor in the proper care of their bodies. Tonight he would have only time for the respiratory and circulatory systems, next time would come the digestive and excretory tracts, and he hoped to finish in six lectures. It was, of course, a broad subject and much water had passed under the bridge since his day, but with their generous help he hoped that the thing might be done.

He talked for fifty minutes, that being a college period, and at its close he bowed again. He then came from behind the table and shook them warmly by the hand. "You will forgive a foolish old man, I know. You see I haven't given a lecture since I resigned eight years ago, and I thought I'd like to do it up brown. And now, Herbert"—for the elaborate old man had appeared at the close of the lecture —"please bring in the things."

The "things" were some little round cup cakes,

three wine glasses, and a large bottle of sauterne.

"The summer we graduated," Mr. Sprig went on, "my classmate Curtis and I went abroad. We took a walking trip south of Bordeaux, and on that walk we discovered this wine. I have kept in touch with the people who make it ever since, and although I shall never get any more, I shall have enough to last me. You must try a glass, Miss Whitman. I assure you it will improve all of your systems!"

When Nancy first looked at her watch it was nearly eleven.

"You mustn't go, of course, until you have seen the chickens," said Mr. Sprig.

The chickens! Under the charm of the softly lighted room, the old gentleman's quiet flow of half-whimsical, half-serious reminiscence, they had been carried back to the rosy days that were before their birth. Now they dreaded lest their host should show himself a little mad, after all.

He lit a bedside candle, and at his request they followed him out upon a sun parlor. And there, indeed, was a wire-enclosed runaway with a white-washed shelf at the end supporting four sleeping forms. The candle moved nearer, and there they were—beyond any possible doubt, Plymouth Rocks.

To see them at night was a nice problem, he explained. Being a little light-minded about sunshine, it seemed that they were unable to discriminate between heaven's high lamp and the electric one on the porch, and would dutifully arise when either appeared. Once down from their perch, they would

refuse to return until the sun was removed; and when it chanced to be the one on the porch and was switched off, they were unable to return because their endowment of optic nerve was small and their homing instinct, so strong in bees and eagles, smaller. There was created, accordingly, an *impasse,* but Mr. Sprig, who knew his hens, circumvented it. He lit a bedside candle which merely troubled his friends' sleep.

"The one on the extreme left is Helen of Troy. She is a stunning creature, as you can see. She produced an egg for me only this morning. Next is Malvolio. I confess I am partial to him. Then comes Little Nell. She is extremely demure and inclined to be sentimental. And last is Carol Kennicott, who chatters so much I am afraid I shall shortly have to pop her into a pie." He gazed at her affectionately. "Well," he continued as he led the way back into his library, "I have now shown you my treasures. They, of course, seem a little crazy to you, and I hope your lives will end so fully that you won't have to fall back on them. But in case either of you should find yourself old and foolish and alone, I can recommend them as pleasant and amiable companions. You will find them curiously simple—they are not offended if you don't call upon them or write them letters,—and then from time to time they yield up to you the shining miracle of an egg, for which they ask no recompense; and when they come to lay down their lives they do it with a gesture and make the day a feast."

He was standing before the dying fire, surrounded by its genial light, as his guests withdrew. Near him, just touched by the firelight, were the crumbs of their supper and the stately old bottle which had given its bouquet to the room. Old Herbert, moving out of the shadow noiselessly and pleasantly, bowed them out, and as the vision faded one of the guests, at least, pictured the four friends on the sun porch readjusting themselves, after their fitful fever, to the gentle life of their home.

VIII

THE following Thursday night Tom called at the Whitmans' to rehearse the lecture. Nancy's cousin Bob had arranged to have two rooms reserved for them during the Friday noon hour at the Mills, and they had agreed that the best way to prepare for the ordeal was to study their notes and get their material in final shape and then have a dress rehearsal on Thursday night. "After a while," Nancy had said, "when we work into the harness, we probably won't need to have one, but I don't think we can be too careful of this first lecture." This had been precisely Tom's opinion also.

Tom had never seen Henry so amiable. In fact he seemed hard put to it to keep from unrestrained merriment, and Tom, who found the affair more alarming as it progressed, would have preferred avoiding him altogether. He knew that Henry was calling him callow, a lightweight, charges well-nigh proved by his present undertaking, and to save himself from rout he had to remember that Henry was a heavy Grave man and that his own participation was only a question of common courtesy to a lady, anyway. Nancy had set her heart upon the thing, and he would be a very indifferent

friend to stand idly by and not lift a finger to help.

"I believe," said Henry, "that we are to sit in the drawing-room. Nancy will stand in the far end of the library."

"I see," replied Tom vaguely.

"She feels that having the conditions rather trying tonight will help her tomorrow. Accordingly, she's going to speak first, and she wants me to excuse her for not being here when you arrived. By coming in formally and beginning her address without speaking to us, she hopes to get some of the feeling of the way it will be tomorrow." And with a somewhat hysterical noise he went to the stairway. "All right, Nancy."

In a minute Nancy appeared on the stairs and, walking stiffly across into the library, she climbed upon a footstool at the far end. In front of her was an old violin stand. Upon it she put her notes. She then raised her face; and even at the distance it appeared flushed.

"Fellow workers," she began.

At this point Henry broke into uncontrollable laughter. "Excuse me, really, but it is too much. 'Fellow workers'—oh, dear me. Oh, oh, I am afraid I can't stand it. You must excuse me, really. Oh, dear me," and rising weakly, handkerchief in hand, he tottered from the room.

Nancy, the picture of resigned despair, gazed at Tom. He felt slightly hysterical himself.

"What are we to do?" she asked helplesly. As they were nearly fifty feet apart, the pitch of her

voice was necessarily above that used in ordinary conversation and gave to her words considerable melodramatic force. A fresh shout of laughter descending from the stairs made the situation none the easier.

Nancy was, indeed, thoroughly upset. What was to become of her independent life if this failed? How else could she express herself? Was it to collapse at the very start, before she could even approach her dreams for the future? To have it end ridiculously, to have her become a laughing stock, would be too cruel. No, she would fight for her liberty.

"Why, the thing to do is to go on," replied Tom. Had those words been said at Marengo or Poitiers or Persepolis, they might today be learned by school children. They were of the stuff that wins lost causes. They stem defeat as effectively as fresh battalions.

"Fellow workers," Nancy began again, and this time there was only respectful silence, "I have come to you today to tell you a little something about the machines which are forever your property, which were given to you by your Maker and which it is your sacred duty to keep in as good condition as possible. I mean your own bodies." She paused, and Tom nodded encouragement from the other room. "It has become my pleasant duty to come to you and tell you how you may keep these God-given machines. You are to regard me, in other words, as your friend and sister." The lecturer

was here threatened by a dry, pippy, cough and the whole course was imperilled. However, she drove fiercely on.

"At the outset you should have a brief working knowledge of such things as your heart and lungs, your pancreas, liver, big and little intestines and their juices; and I shall, accordingly, give you a brief idea of the various systems, beginning today with the circulatory and respiratory. Next time I shall hope to cover the digestive and excretory tracts, and I shall close with two talks on personal hygiene." This ended the preliminary matter, and the lecturer proceeded with the body of her talk in a somewhat more mechanical style. The respiratory system was dismissed in six minutes, although, in some curious way, Mr. Sprig had strung the same material out to half an hour.

Before beginning upon the circulatory system, however, she sprang a surprise. "For your convenience," she explained, "I shall draw a diagram of the heart and its valves, and with your assistance I shall explain its action." After a little wrestling with the diagram, which *would* curl, she managed to pin it to the wall. She then proceeded, in red crayon, to draw a fully equipped heart. She finished with audible relief and, turning triumphantly —greeted Miss Balch and her brother Leofwin.

"Dear me, I am afraid we are intruding," said Miss Balch, looking around with ingenuous charm.

Henry, having heard the bell which the social workers had been too absorbed to hear, appeared at

the door and relieved the situation temporarily. Leofwin, however, whose eye was naturally caught by the pictorial, was gazing at the circulatory system on the wall. "What on earth is that?" he asked, with more curiosity than was perhaps excusable. "It looks for all the world like some sort of impressionistic valentine."

Nancy, for one reckless moment, was tempted to say that it was, but temperate judgment prevailed. After all, why need she be ashamed of what they were doing?

"Tom and I are giving a course of lectures at the Mill, in hygiene, and we are just rehearsing a little; that's all. The valentine shows the heart action. Those arm things are the valves, you see."

"But, really, you know, even a valve must have some perspective."

"Well, of course, I'm no artist. The cut in the dictionary was very small, and when I enlarged it I tried to get the right proportions, but I just had my tape measure and——"

"I shall help you. Elfrida will bear me out: I have always been interested in the lower classes, and I shall love to go with you and draw it when the time comes."

"Oh, I couldn't let you do that."

"Why not? I admit I've had no experience, but, after all, in a work of this kind, it is the spirit that counts, isn't it?"

Elfrida had engaged Tom and Henry at a point as far distant as she could from her brother and

Nancy, and she now asked Tom what he thought of Somebody's latest novel and made him lose track of their conversation.

"Are you *really* a realist?" asked Miss Balch.

"No, I don't think I am."

"Fancy," replied Miss Balch. "Then I think you would like a thing I got out of the library the other day by one of these new Russians. He has some dreadful name. Well, it is about this man, a peasant, who falls in love with this Bolshevist agent, and she uses the man, you see, as a tool. Then there is this other woman in it who——"

Leofwin had adopted a very free-and-easy manner, it seemed to Tom. He was sitting with his legs crossed, hands folded, one arm over the back of his chair, half facing Nancy. He was being extremely bland and at his ease. It was the sort of thing one might do in a Russian drawing-room, perhaps, where the ladies doubtless didn't mind being bitten in a fit of passion, but it was decidedly not the way to behave in Woodbridge—although it must be confessed that an impartial observer might have failed to distinguish any marked difference in the way Tom himself was sitting, since he, too, had crossed his legs, folded his hands, and was half facing Nancy. It was clear that Nancy was painfully trying to do the honours. "You must let me see your pictures," Tom heard her say.

". . .Really, Mr. Reynolds, I think you might listen to me when I'm trying so hard to entertain you."

"Why, I heard everything you said. All about this new Russian."

"Sly boots!" said Miss Balch archly.

Tom wondered what the proper reply was. What he wanted to say, in the same arch manner was "Puss Wuss!" but instead he just grinned brightly and let it be inferred that he was thinking of all sorts of clever things.

"A penny for your thoughts, sir," cried Miss Balch.

This was unbearable, especially since Henry was apparently enjoying it so much.

"I hope you won't think me rude, but I was thinking of the great pile of uncorrected test papers at home on my desk, and I am afraid you will have to excuse me." He rose. The whole room rose.

He started for the door, and Nancy hurried over to him. "Isn't it dreadful?" she seemed to say. Behind her, like Tartarin's camel, loomed Leofwin.

"We'll meet here at twelve," Nancy said, and with an effort she managed to include the cavalier and irrepressible artist, who, beaming and bowing, showed in every corner of him his thorough approval of the whole arrangement.

IX

BY a coincidence, the two men arrived at ten minutes to twelve. They found Nancy in a rather pathetic state of excitement. She had been running up and down stairs and from one room to another and she met them with the elaborate calm of one about to give himself up to a capital operation.

"We have a nice day for it, anyway," she said bravely. Any agreeable condition, however remote it might at first appear from the business at hand, was welcome. "Tell me," she asked Tom, "do you think I'm dresesd suitably?"

"Perfectly."

"Some social workers go down in the slums in the worst old clothes they can find, but I've heard that the people down there like to see nice things, so I compromised. This is just a gingham dress, you see, but I'm wearing my pearls."

"I should think that's just right. Didn't Henry, the Labour expert, help you?"

"Oh, I didn't bother him. He's not interested, you see."

Leofwin, who had been fidgeting around for an opening, now burst forth. "I came early," he said, "*to find* out if I can't do the lungs too; I've been

practising them along with the heart, you know, and I think it might go well dashing them in somewhere. What?" Leofwin's "what's" were noteworthy. They were in a higher key than the rest of his conversation, which was itself high, and he drew them out to almost exquisite lengths. They were nearly all that was left of his week-end with the patron in Suffolk.

"Oh, dear me, no," replied Nancy with considerable spirit.

"I think you will like my heart," he continued undismayed. "I've been doing them all morning. I dug up some priceless old Beaux Arts crayons. It will be nice when we get to the brain. It's awfully romantic, I find," and he gave Nancy a killing smile. She gazed at him placidly and then turned to Tom. "What time is it?" she asked.

"Nearly twelve."

At this point Edmund drove up, and with renewed palpitations the party proceeded to the Mill.

As they passed in through the gates Tom noticed with sickening dread a huge sign in flaming letters, "ARE YOU PHYSICALLY FIT? *Mr. Reynolds of Woodbridge Will Address You*——" They were met by Bob Whitman, a hearty young man who had just been made an officer of the Company. He stared at Leofwin in amused bewilderment.

"Mr. Balch is helping me with the diagrams," explained Nancy. "And now where do we go?"

"Well, you'd better just sit here for a minute or

two until they get settled with their lunches. I'll take you to where you go; and what's more, Nancy, I'll introduce you!" Nancy received the word "introduce" as a surgical case receives the initial injection of morphine. The first step had been taken, and nothing could save her. "As for you, Tom, your lecture room's over there, and I'll get the foreman to introduce you."

"Don't think of it," said Tom quickly, "I'll just introduce myself; get to be one of them, you know what I mean. Just one of the boys."

"Well, Miss Whitman, let's you and I get to be just one of the girls," tittered Leofwin.

"I think we might as well go in," said Nancy without noticing Leofwin's jest, which appeared singularly hollow.

"You're sure you don't want some one to start you off, Tom?" asked Bob.

Tom was certain of it; and before entering his room, he waited until Nancy's party had disappeared around the corner. He then opened the door and, going over to a man who was ruminating vacantly upon a huge chunk of bread, sat down. "There's going to be some sort of lecture here, today, isn't there?" he asked.

"I dunno," replied the man.

"Yeah, there is," spoke up a hand nearby. "I seen it on a sign this morning. Some guy from the college."

"That's what I thought," said Tom. "I thought I'd just come in and see what he had to say. Can't

stay very long, though," he added, looking at his watch. Then after a pause, "Pretty nice place you got here."

"Oh, it's good enough, I guess."

The room was a large one, filled with three or four dozen tables bearing complicated-looking machinery. There were twenty or thirty men sitting around solemnly chewing their food.

"Pretty slow now, isn't it?" asked Tom.

"Yeah, they laid off about a hundred last week."

"This laying-off stuff would have gone bigger a couple of years ago—in the army—wouldn't it?"

"I'll say it would."

"Have a cigarette?" said Tom. "What outfit were you in?"

The prospect of free cigarettes and army talk, which already in less than three years had taken on a romantic glow, attracted the other men, who, as they finished their lunches, came up and joined the circle. Tom was holding forth in the centre; and when Bob Whitman glanced in on his way home he could see that Tom, by making his talk informal, was getting it across in great style.

Once, during the conversation, Providence seemed to offer an opportunity of bringing in his lecture in such a way that no one would guess he was giving it.

His conscience bothered him a little, and he plunged ahead. One of the men told how his bunkie at Base Six in Bordeaux had died of heart failure when under ether. In a somewhat parched

voice Tom started to explain how this could come about, but in no time he was talking gibberish. "The aorta," he heard himself saying, "is the big main artery which comes out of one of the ventricles," and then he noticed the dazed look on the men's faces and, floundering hopelessly, managed to laugh it off. Well, he had tried to talk to them, anyway, and by consulting his watch he found that half an hour had gone by.

After his third cigarette—he had come plentifully supplied—he looked at his watch again. He could go at last! It was ten minutes to one, and Nancy had probably finished long ago. "Apparently this guy isn't coming today. I've got to run along. Well, I've enjoyed this talk a lot," and with an inclusive smile and wave of the hand he went.

Nancy wasn't back in the car, and starting off in the direction they had taken, he soon came to her room. There must have been a hundred women in it and it was Leofwin, not Nancy, who was talking to them.

Tom opened the door quietly and sat down on a stool in the rear. Nancy, pale and helpless, was sitting on one side of a resplendent circulatory system drawn to illustrate the subtleties of the designer's art.

"You will observe, ladies," Leofwin was saying in his purest Suffolk manner, "that shading is done with the crayon well back, like this." He made a few swift lines on the corner of the System and looked up with his bright, inquisitive smile. "Now

are there any questions?" There was a stony silence, amid which the one o'clock whistle blew.

The foreman, left in charge by Bob, rose. "I'm sorry, Miss Whitman, but I'm afraid we'll have to stop today."

The worker's friend and sister bowed to him and, clutching her notes and her bag, with firmly set lips and eyes fixed, marched to the door. Leofwin followed, bowing pleasantly right and left, to the intense gratification of his audience, and the trio retired.

"Jolly, wasn't it?" said Leofwin. "I'm sorry, though, we couldn't have had more time. I didn't get to foreshortening at all. However, I think I probably helped them a good deal. Sometime I'd like to tell them about etching, you know, and aqua—and mezzotints."

Nancy received her assistant's remarks in complete silence. She was even unable to do more than nod a good-bye to him. But she shook Tom's hand in parting, and, with an air that might augur the worst, she asked him to come and see her on the next afternoon.

Nancy was particularly charming, Tom thought when he was again with her, and what was even more to the point, he found that they were to be alone. She got his tea ready without difficulty—he was flattered that she remembered his formula—and they settled back for a good talk and laugh.

"I wasn't civil to him, but I really don't care! Did you ever know a more dreadful person?"

"Never. He's awful. But, tell me, how did it go until he took charge?"

"Why, not so badly. But, oh, Tom I heard about you!"

Tom flushed. "What did you hear?"

"Well, Bob was here last night and he said he saw you through the window. He told us how you got them all around you and how you might have been talking about anything." She was wholly admiring.

"Oh, I just talked to them," he said. "I never could have gotten away with anything formal."

"Isn't it funny? I used to think that teaching must be the easiest thing in the world. I used to imagine myself lecturing to the whole college, but I can appreciate now what you and Henry are doing."

Tom was anxious to have the conversation move upon firmer ground. He was also in the dark as to what the next move in the campaign was to be.

Was it to be abandoned, or were they to try and carry on? The latter possibility seemed too fearful. How could he go into that room again? But one must proceed cautiously. It would never do, for example, to come out and treat the whole thing as a distinctly juvenile performance, something they had quite outgrown, until it was clear that they *had* outgrown it. Again, now was not the time to explain the real nature of his lecture. He could do that when the whole thing had become an amusing

memory. "What are we going to do about Mr. Sprig?" asked Tom vaguely.

"You mean are we going to keep on with the lectures?"

"Well, yes."

"What do you think? Last night I was so sick about the whole thing that I was ready to give it all up, but now I wonder if it isn't our duty to give it one more trial." Her words were disappointing, but the dispirited tone in which she said them was cheering, and Tom made so bold as to sing the lately revived "Duty, duty must be done, the rule applies to everyone, and painful though the duty be, to shirk the task were fiddle-dee-dee . . ."; a happy impulse, for when Henry arrived from his five o'clock he found Tom at the piano and Nancy sitting by him, the one in the rôle of the Mikado of Japan and the other as his daughter-in-law-elect.

When, however, on the following Tuesday they again climbed down from the fourth floor of the Whitman building, the light had indeed gone out of the undertaking. Mr. Sprig's subject, the digestive and excretory tracts, had not been a propitious one for so critical a time. Leofwin, who had invited himself along, had been captivated by the decorative possibilities of the alimentary canal and had led the discussion following the lecture with a vigour and thoroughness trying for those unfamiliar with an artist's training. "Don't you think it might be fun to trace something all the way from the initial

bite down?" he asked. "Let's take an olive, a green olive. 'Back to Nature by A. Green Olive: A Drama in Six Acts and any Number of Scenes.'"

Tom was looking intently at the diagrams on the walls. At musical comedies and the movies, when embarrassing situations arose, one was, in a measure, prepared. The darkness, too, helped, and one could stare straight ahead until the relief, which was rarely long in coming, arrived. There was, finally, the comfort of numbers. But now they were only two—the artist and the scientist being immune to shame. It was, furthermore, extremely bright, everybody was out in the open, and although the amateurs had come prepared for a momentary brush with a bowel or two, they had no reason to expect a prolonged causerie upon even more intimate matters. Tom was, accordingly, hot with embarrassment, and he had reason to believe that Nancy was also.

As Leofwin rattled on, with frankness ever more Elizabethan, Tom glanced at Nancy. She was examining the point of her pencil with as elaborate an interest as he had ever seen shown in any object. It seemed an altogether remarkable affair; but then, apparently, so was the eraser. They were complementary. A line could be made by the point, a delicate, straight line; and then, reversing the pencil, the line could be taken out by the eraser. The thing was complete.

Tom became angry. What right had that great calf to subject Nancy to such an ordeal? He turned

to her and said without lowering his voice, "This is rather dull, don't you think? Let's go out and see the hens."

They went out, but couldn't very well see the hens, since they had no candle and were above deceiving them with the porch light. Accordingly, they stepped back into the little hallway that led to the library. To go on into the library was to expose themselves again to the mortification of the physiological vagaries of Leofwin. So they just stood in the little hallway. And then, they laughed.

The relief of a thunderstorm on a stifling day is proverbial, as is the relief of finding one's handkerchief just before one sneezes; but what are these compared with the flooding joy that comes with release from an embarrassing situation with a young lady? The effect upon Tom was to make him excited; more so, perhaps, than he had ever been. It was the same swelling, throbbing excitement he had felt when, waiting in his room on the afternoon of his Election Day, he realized by the shouting of the crowd below that his election was coming.

Nancy was really wonderful. From being curious about her, he had been swept into the Problem of Living with which he had found her somewhat pathetically struggling. It had absorbed him in the brief time that he had encountered it; and now that her first attempt at a solution had ended in ridiculous failure, she immediately rose above it in laughter!

And how happy was the cause of their laughter, after all. An experience such as the one they had

just come through must make or break a friendship. Their relationship could not remain the same; and with their laughter they had sealed the new bond.

They said little as they strolled home, alone, in the clear night. It had in it the first suggestion of spring; and neither, apparently, found need to hurry.

"Bob will have to straighten it out at the Mill," said Nancy, "and I shall write Mr. Sprig. I think we ought to send him something, don't you?"

They had come to the Whitman gate. It was a high wooden structure, connected at the top, and in the spring it was covered with roses. The fanlight in the old doorway shone down the brick walk and touched Nancy's hair.

"Of course we must."

They shook hands and bade each other good night. And then, as Nancy turned from him and went up the lighted walk and into the house, Tom knew without any particular surprise and quite without a rising temperature, that he loved her.

X

NANCY emerged from her social service work with the feeling that she had added several chapters to the store of her experience. The sheep-like expression that covered the composite face of her group had brought home to her the ineffectiveness of her plan. One couldn't, it was clear, go down among the masses, no matter how thoughtfully dressed, with only an equipment of good will, and hope to do them much good. Nor was she, she now suspected, the person to attempt such a career. She fancied she saw inherent weaknesses in her character which would preclude a successful performance. She had been frightened, rather than inspired, by the women in that room, particularly by the women of her own age. "What right have you to come down here with your pearls and your simple gingham dress," she felt they were asking, " and get off a lot of this college stuff to us?" What right indeed? She was convinced, in short, that she had been embarked upon a hopeless piece of snobbery, and, finding the whole business distasteful, it had not been difficult to discover her unfitness.

The time had not been wasted, however. Not only had she satisfied herself that a career of Uplift was not for her, but she had made a friend into the

bargain. Tom, she decided, had behaved beautifully through it; and in her humbled state of mind the offence she had taken at his acting in the charade became all the more odious. What a mean-minded girl she could be, to be sure; yet how perfectly he had risen above the situation. He had received her rudeness with an instinctive fineness that gave freshness to the Biblical admonition about the other cheek. He had returned good for evil, and in supporting her through the ordeal of the Uplift Plan he had proved himself a tower of strength.

Tom and she, a few days after the final lecture, had gone together to the college book shop and picked out their present for Professor Sprig. They had dawdled over the shelves, pulling down a book here and another there, meeting every few minutes to show each other a possibility, and then putting it back. The thing could, of course, have been done much more quickly, but neither seemed in a hurry to find the right one, for they both liked books, and the shop was well-stocked, and the clerks did not descend like buzzards upon them. They at length selected a rag-paper, wide-margined copy of Calverley's *Verses and Fly Leaves* and laughed at its inappropriateness for the physiologist. Still, they were confident enough that Mr. Sprig knew his Calverley quite as well as they, and that another copy would not be a burden. It had been a delightful two hours, and Nancy, at dinner, began a detailed account of it.

But Henry was not interested. "It seems to me

that you are seeing a good deal of Tom Reynolds, lately," was all that he said.

And why shouldn't she see a good deal of Tom Reynolds? she asked herself. There was that in Henry's tone which opened up the old-time anger. Here he was, questioning her again, this time questioning her friends. He was questioning Tom!

Had Henry wished to further the young man's chances with his sister to the best of his ability, he could not have chosen a more effective method. Tom, who had been doing very well on his own account, was now made doubly romantic through persecution. Nor do I think Nancy should be condemned as over-sentimental for feeling so, for if the reader —who cannot conceivably be thought over-sentimental—examine his own experience, I dare say he will find a parallel. In any event, Nancy was in a fair way to discover a tender interest in Tom, if, indeed, she had not already done so.

But in the meantime, she must be true to herself and live richly. She had not yet determined what her new work would be, nor should she determine what it would be until she had considered the matter more dispassionately than she had the last one. Until the right thing was apparent, therefore, she would devote herself with more assiduity to the physical, mental, and spiritual progress of her nephew. After all, what finer work could there be than the rearing of a first-class American youth?

Henry had sent his son to Miss West's kindergarten when he was scarcely four. Harry had not

done well at the various cutting and pasting exercises, but he had been somewhat precocious at reading and was already advanced into the third reader. His orthographic sense, however, had not yet unbudded, and it was to the gentle fostering of this, in particular, that Nancy now committed herself. She also thought it high time that his musical education should commence, and the services of Miss Marbury were invoked. Harry, unlike the general run of his fellows, was wholly charmed with the prospect of playing, and the old piano was assailed with a diligence reminiscent of the youthful Händel. So it happened that Harry was practising in mid-afternoon on the day when Leofwin Balch called, something over a week after the débâcle of Nancy's social service career.

Nancy, too, was at home and was much surprised and annoyed when her late assistant appeared. Not the least surprising feature of his call was his costume. Usually clad with a conspicuous and artistic carelessness, he was today arrayed like the lilies of the field. He was wearing a morning coat, faultlessly pressed, and in its buttonhole bloomed a gardenia. He carried a stick with a gold band around it, his spats were of a light and wonderful tan, and in his hand, in place of the usual greenish-brown veteran, he held a grey fedora of precisely the shape and shade worn by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, on the occasion of that happiest of events, his recent visit to our country.

"I learned from your chauffeur that you were at

home," said Leofwin, smiling graciously, "but I had no way of knowing that you were alone."

He had actually been spying on her! "Why didn't you call up one of the maids?" replied Nancy with more asperity than was perhaps becoming in a hostess.

"Delightful picture," laughed Leofwin, "but as a matter of fact you see I don't know any of them, what?" and he nodded pleasantly.

Harry, who had progressed to the D scale at his second and latest lesson, was going over it with all the ardour of first love, and contributed a tinkly-winkly background which was vaguely disturbing. It was not near enough, however, to be quite recognizable, and Leofwin carried on without comment, supposing it to be a kind of funny clock, or something.

"I called," he continued, "at this odd hour in the hope that I might find out how you are after our recent attempt to improve the lower classes." He drew his chair up nearer to Nancy as he spoke, and there was a tenderness in his tone that alarmed her, particularly in the way he emphasized "our."

"I am quite well, thank you."

"Oh, but I am glad to hear it," he said.

The fervour of his words was nonsensical, but his intention, alas, was becoming clear.

"If you will forgive me," he continued, "I shall begin at once upon the business at hand. We artists, you know, are sometimes accused of being unbusinesslike. Goodness only knows, I am a mere

child at stocks and bonds and par and all those things, but the underlying essence of business I rather fancy I have—that is, quickness of perception. Now I quickly perceive that we are likely to be interrupted here at almost any minute." He paused and looked about a little wildly. "I do wish we might have a more secluded nook for our talk." Nancy, however, who was now prepared for the worst, did not offer more seclusion and her lover continued. "I wish we had some grotto where I could lead you. I would have it on the Libyan shore. Overhead would be the azure sky. Before us, stealing up the golden beach, would be the Mediterranean. What a colourful scene! Soft breezes would lull you to my mood, and on their spicy-laden breath would come the notes of faëry music."

While preparing for this call Leofwin had laboured over that conceit with all the diligence at his command; perhaps too diligently, for even he, had he not been blinded by zeal, might have seen that it was something too ornate to appeal to a rather practical young lady of twenty-five. It was much too ornate, that is certain; and it alone would have made him absurd had not fate joined forces against him and at precisely this point prompted Harry, who was for once impatient with his progress, to try to reproduce the larger music coursing through his soul. This he did by striking out wildly upon the keys in all directions; and at the same time the faithful Clarence, slumberingly waiting for his

master's return to earthly matters, burst into full cry.

"Good gracious, what is that?" cried Leofwin.

Nancy sped to the door of the music room, while strange and crashing harmonies rang through the house. "Stop, Harry. Stop that dreadful noise. You mustn't do that. Some one is calling on me. I think you had better go out and play, anyway."

"Oh, please, Auntie, please let me play the scales some more. Just for fifteen minutes."

It would have taken a heart of flint to withstand such pleading. Nancy left the musician and went boldly back to her visitor.

Leofwin was plainly annoyed by the interruption. He should now have to start all over again, and starting was difficult. As Nancy reappeared, however, the clouds rolled from his brow.

"Is everything quite all right?" he asked solicitously.

"Quite all right, thank you."

"Well, in speaking just now of the Libyan grotto, I think I probably suggested the theme of my visit to you this afternoon. I confess, I am a passionate man. Things of the senses appeal to me more than to most; it is, of course, the artist within me. I am like a mountain torrent or the beetling crest of an ocean comber rushing, full-bodied, down upon—upon—the floor." He came to a full stop and stared with pursed lips at the object of his love, sitting unhappily before him. What the devil *do*

mountain torrents and ocean combers rush down upon? Nothing as domestic, surely, as a floor. The thing was unhappily met.

"Please, Mr. Balch," said Nancy, rising, "please don't go any further. I really can't listen to you."

"Nancy," he cried, attempting to seize her hand. "I must call you 'Nancy.' I must call you more than that. With you by my side there will be nothing I cannot do. I shall make your name ring down the ages—like Madame Récamier, or—or, Mona Lisa. I already have planned a piece for us. You are to be Miranda, and I shall be Ferdinand. You are just emerging from your bath, and I am peering through the bushes at you——"

The picture was such a dreadful one that Nancy could endure the situation no longer. From being anxious to let him down as easily as possible—for he was, after all, paying her a compliment—she wished the scene over at any cost. He was making the most holy of moments a travesty. She felt amazingly self-possessed.

"I appreciate the honour of your intention, Mr. Balch"—the language was that of Jane Austen, whom she had just been reading—"but I cannot allow it to go on. In fact," she hastened to add, for he showed signs of going on, "I shall have to ask you to go."

The D scale, laboriously achieved, floated in from the music room. Leofwin turned away and Nancy, standing aside for him, was dismayed to note that

his little eyes were filled with sorrow and disappointment.

"It is true," he said, "that I have for some time wanted you for myself, but of late another reason has been urging me on. If it hadn't been for it, I don't think I could have come to you. You see, it is my sister. She has set her heart upon a trip abroad; not an ordinary touristy trip, you know, but a real one—to Italy. We have now only enough money for one to go—I gladly resigned it to her—but she does not feel that she can leave me alone. If only you could have—but there, my dear, I'll not go on."

Nancy was a little disconcerted by this sudden turn. The situation had become almost impersonal. "I'm sorry," she said. She wished that she could have thought of a better remark—a better one came in the night, when she was going over the whole affair—but he seemed grateful even for that.

"Thank you," he said. "But Elfrida will be so disappointed. You simply can't imagine how this will spoil all her plans. But perhaps you will let me try again some time?"

Harry was following his right hand with his left, an octave lower, with almost no success.

"No, I am afraid not," said Nancy as they stood in the doorway. She softened her words, however, by holding out her hand.

"Good-bye," he replied, gently taking it; and then, following the Continental custom, he stooped and

kissed it, much to the amusement of two undergraduates who were at the time passing down Tutors' Lane.

XI

ON the morning following the final lecture Tom woke early, and his mind flew to the miracle of the preceding night. He was now ablaze with Nancy! It was a dazzling business, but when had it happened? It had not been as though he had gazed too boldly into the sun and had fallen down, blinded by the light of it. It had, to date, been altogether painless. He had seen Nancy in various situations, some of them pleasant, some of them trying. He had liked the way she had met them; and then it dawned upon him that her behaviour was consistently good; and next he knew that it would always be so. This was a stupendous discovery, the more so since he was not aware of any such consistency in his own character. Had he not learned in elementary physics that unlike poles attract one another? He could even now picture a diagram in the book showing the hearty plus pole in happy affinity with the retiring minus pole, a figure which proved the thing beyond a doubt. Science, when made to serve as handmaiden to the arts, has its uses, after all, and Tom took comfort in its present service.

Still, Nancy wasn't "cut and dried"; it would be a grave injustice to imagine her so. She was con-

sistent in an ever new and charming way; she never obtruded her consistency. One would almost certainly never be bored with her; and yet one could depend upon her through thick and thin. He thought of the way the crew on a ferry boat throw their ropes over the great piles as they make fast in the slip. Nancy was such a pile—but what an odious figure! He thought of her face as he had first seen it on the night of the Vernal, when, slightly flushed and smilingly expectant, she had peered into the costume closet. A couplet floated out of Freshman English into his mind—something about a countenance which had in it sweet records and promises as sweet. He jumped out of bed to verify it, and found:

> "A countenance in which did meet
> Sweet records, promises as sweet."

He read on:

> "A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food,
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and
> smiles."

There was one more verse, and the last two couplets covered everything.

> "A perfect Woman, nobly planned
> To warm, to comfort. and command;
> And yet a Spirit still, and bright
> With something of an angel-light."

He turned the book down, open at this point, and resolved to memorize those lines.

His youth and playtime had now left him for good. The time for half-hearted or three-quarters-hearted attempts to forge ahead were over. He had pledged his heart and shortly hoped to pledge his hand in the service of the loveliest young lady in the world, none less. At present he was only a young instructor; of promise, perhaps, but still unproved. The immediate goal in his academic career was an Assistant Professorship; and although, even under the most favourable circumstances, it would probably be a matter of at least three years before he got it, nevertheless he could at least make it plain that he was indubitably on the way to it, and that (giddy thought) he was even of the stuff that Full Professors are made on! And no time should be lost before this were shown. Dressing feverishly, he corrected some slightly overdue test papers; and when he appeared at breakfast his landlady's three other guests noted the spirit in his bearing and commented upon it when he left.

There was to be a meeting of the Freshman English Department in the afternoon, and Tom found himself looking eagerly forward to it. He had no idea of the business that was coming up, but he was going to be extremely keen-eyed and watchful about it, whatever it was. The little slump which he had allowed to creep into his work recently was over. He wondered if any of his colleagues had noticed it, and in particular he wondered if Professor

Dawson, Head of the Department, had noticed it.

Professor Dawson was Tom's beau ideal of all that a university instructor should be. Tom had had him when in college, had taken everything that he taught; and he looked back upon the hours spent at his feet as among the best of his whole life. To teach like that was to be doing something indeed; and it was the picture of himself giving formal lectures in the Dawsonian manner that had finally led him into teaching. That Tom should have imitated as best he could the Dawsonian manner and method was, therefore, inevitable, but it none the less exposed him to the smiles of the Department. A member of it, a Professor Furbush, found occasion to refer to the Johnsonian anecdote anent sprats talking like whales; and, Tom hearing of it, there was brought into being one of the enmities which add zest to collegiate existence. Professor Dawson was a young man to be so celebrated, being only some fifteen years older than Tom himself. He was, of course, a Full Professor—the only Full Professor in Freshman English.

Next in rank to him in the Department was Mr. Brainerd, a gentleman who was nearly as much Professor Dawson's senior as Dawson was Tom's. Mr. Brainerd was, however, only an Assistant Professor, and it was now understood by all that he would never be anything higher. Fifteen years ago when he produced his chef-d'œuvre on Smollett his hopes had run high. At that time his fate hung in the bal-

ance. He could no longer be regarded as one of the "younger men," and his status was to be determined once and for all. The crowning glory of a Full Professorship could only go to one who had made some significant contribution to his subject. Would *Tobias Smollett* be that? Into it had gone all that Brainerd could give, and it had, after a brief and generally indifferent appearance in the reviews, dropped out of sight. Then it was recognized that good old Burt Brainerd would have to putter through life as best he could. Mr. Brainerd felt no particular bitterness about it, certainly no bitterness towards the College. He had been disappointed in his publisher. He should have gone to Beeson, Pancoast with it; instead of to Trull. Trull hadn't pushed it at all: they merely announced it with a string of books on very dull subjects. Then, too, they had used a cursed small type. He had protested against this and had been told that a larger type would have made it much more expensive, would probably have necessitated doing the work in two volumes. They had had the calm assurance to talk to him of expense when he had consented to waive his royalties on the first five hundred copies!—an exemption, by the way, which they had not yet succeeded in working off. Well, that had been his main chance, and he now watched the rise of younger men with equanimity. And it must be confessed that he got a certain amount of cold comfort from the remembrance that on three several occasions

good things had come to him from out of the west, and that he need not have remained "assistant" had he not elected to do so.

Were it not for his wife, he might have become content. The library was a strong one, particularly in his field, and what more delightful end for a scholar than to browse at will in his period and write essays for the literary magazines? But Mrs. Brainerd chafed. Not having been a woman of means or of any particular position, she had been somewhat self-conscious in mixing with the great ones of the place. She had, at length, however, after a residence of nearly twenty years, decided that to live so was nothing; and she had boldly called upon Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee. She had found the great lady all charm and friendliness; but when, upon leaving, she had expressed the hope that Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee might be inclined to return her call, Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee had replied, "Thank you." "Is it 'Thank you, yes' or 'Thank you, no' ?" the rash woman had persisted. To which Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee had bowed, "Well, since you insist, I'm afraid it will have to be 'Thank you, no.' " Mr. Brainerd had felt the snub perhaps more than his wife, although he was most convincing in reassuring her that upon trying again, say with some one of the Whitman family, there would be small danger of such a rebuff. Mrs. Brainerd, however, had not tried again and had, with what stoicism she could command, resigned herself to the path God had ordered for her feet. So Mr. Brainerd's end at

Woodbridge was not a brilliant one, but he did not shrink or cry aloud, and it was generally recognized that dear old Burt Brainerd was a good sport.

The other Assistant Professor in Freshman English has already been mentioned—Jerome Furbush. He was a young man, a classmate of Henry Whitman, and rather intimate in consequence. He was, quite decidedly, a striking figure. Whereas the average member of the Faculty might have been taken for an ordinary business man in his working clothes, Furbush was obviously a man of temperament. Tall and lean, he had allowed his beard to grow into something of patriarchal proportions, or, more exactly, into one of those healthy spade-like growths which the French know so well how to develop. That it was a rich red only added to its distinction, and to his. He was noted for being a hard worker and a wit, but feeling about him was sharply divided. One could not be neutral; either one hailed him as a prophet and seer, or one hated him as an abandoned cynic, a vicious and arbitrary egoist whose presence in the community was a menace. There appeared to be evidence in support of either view. It was true that the Dean's office was frequently absorbed by problems of his making. He had a weakness, to illustrate, for calling his students liars and cheats upon, frequently, tenuous evidence; and the discussions that ensued were never amiable. On the other hand, a certain number of the most promising men in the class were invariably drawn to him and, taking up his battles, defended him against

all detractors. The Permanent Officers had to admit that he got "results," but they shook their heads. Jerome Furbush was notoriously a "case."

Phil Meyers, instructor, had been graduated from a small western college and had taken his PH.D. at a large eastern university. He was what is known as a "monographist," a thesis-writer; and it had become apparent to all that he was not long for the Woodbridge world. Word had repeatedly come through the somewhat devious channels of information that he was "no good." His classes were doing shockingly bad work and they were articulate in their disapproval of him. The coming June would close his first appointment, and it had been tactfully broken to him that he need not expect another.

Such was the personnel of the meeting in Mr. Dawson's office.

"I have called you together today, gentlemen," said Mr. Dawson after the preliminary pleasantries, "to consider the advisibility of changing our course next year. It has been brought to my attention that there has been some criticism of the course as it now stands. Although," he continued, gazing at the blotter before him, "I could have wished that this criticism might have been made first to me, rather than have reached me indirectly, I am grateful for it at any time and welcome this opportunity for discussing it."

The air had become electrified. Everyone understood that the criticism referred to had come from only one source, Furbush, and that Dawson was ad-

ministering to him a public rebuke. Dawson remained staring at his blotter when he finished, and there was complete silence for several seconds. "Well?" he asked, raising his eyes. "Don't hestitate, gentlemen. Although the course is largely of my making at present, there is no reason why it should remain so, and I'm sure no one will welcome an improvement more than I." Another pause. "Come, Jerry, won't you lead the discussion?"

Furbush, who seemed to be waiting to be thus addressed, rather than to presume to take the floor from his superior, Mr. Brainerd, smiled charmingly. "I should frankly wish," he said, "that the discussion be opened by one of you gentlemen, for I feel that my judgment in such a matter is possibly not of much value. I confess that I am not in as warm sympathy as any of you"—by singling out Meyers at this point he lent a quietly insulting tone to his remarks—"with the present course. Were it left to me, I should do away with Wordsworth, substituting, possibly, Swinburne. I have sometimes wondered if we weren't underestimating the potential strength of the Freshman's mind by feeding him on too much pap. By the same token I am inclined to think that I should drop Carlyle and Hawthorne for Matthew Arnold and, perhaps, Cardinal Newman." (Furbush was a High Churchman of a militant dye.) "What I should, of course, do would be to divide the present first term between Spenser and Milton, instead of giving it all to Shakespeare." This last was said

directly to Dawson. It had been Mr. Dawson's particular joy that he could give one whole term to Shakespeare.

Tom was sitting keen-eyed and alert, but it would obviously be madness worse confounded to risk a contribution to this discussion, which was for Titans only. But he was thrilled by the duel before him, even though the outcome was never in doubt, since a show of hands would give a unanimous vote to Dawson whatever the issue. Mr. Dawson, however, declined the gage of battle altogether. He apparently merely wished Furbush to make public confession of the iniquity that was in him; and after noting out loud the changes recommended, he abruptly closed the meeting.

"Well, Jerry, we shall think over what you have said, and a week from today we'd better get together again and act on it. At that time, too, I wish you people would come prepared with your questions for the final examination paper." He looked around pleasantly at the little group. "I guess that will be all today," he said.

Tom had been nothing but a spectator at that meeting; but after the next he emerged radiant. The discussion of the first one had taken only a few minutes. It happened that Mr. Furbush was not able to be present; and it was announced incidentally, that he had been transferred to Sophomore English. Of his proposed changes nothing had been said, although another change was made. It appeared that Mr. Dawson had been

teaching *The Winter's Tale* for the past six years and that he wished the Department's permission to drop it for *Cymbeline*. Mr. Dawson explained that he was getting a little stale on *The Winter's Tale*, and the change was hurriedly made.

What an object lesson was this for the keen-eyed young instructor! On the one hand was the Scylla of Mr. Brainerd and on the other was the Charybdis of Mr. Furbush. Lucky was he who could sail safely past the two; and he was a wise young instructor who determined to follow in the Dawsonian wake.

The final examination paper was then discussed; and Tom, who had come fully prepared and was extremely wide-awake, had contributed the "spot" passage in Wordsworth in its entirety—the couplet,

> "A countenance in which did meet
> Sweet records, promises as sweet,"

was included—and he had, furthermore, lent a most constructive hand in the framing of the Carlyle-transcendental question—a performance which he retailed to Mrs. Norris at the earliest moment, and which made the Assistant Professorship and Nancy seem definitely within his grasp.

Mrs. Norris would have reached the picnicking ground in a procession of buggies, but at that Mary protested so vigorously that she was forced to resign.

The picnic place was a pretty, slightly inaccessible rock overlooking a creek. Though actually not far from Woodbridge, as the road was overgrown and the turns sharp the motor had to proceed with a deliberation which made the trip justifiably difficult. The rock itself was about a hundred yards from the road; and since there was scarcely any path through the woods to it, there were made possible the pretty callings and hallooings, fallings-down and pickings-up, without which no picnic is quite perfect. Mrs. Norris, as a matter of fact, did more than her share of this. She had not gone more than thirty steps into the wood before she was completely lost; and by the time she had been safely brought to the rock her hat was well over on one side, her hair streaming down, and the torn fringe of her petticoat dragging along behind in the dirt. Julia and Horace, the chauffeur, however, had gone directly to the rock without the preliminary vagaries vouchsafed to their superiors, and by the time Mrs. Norris was finally captured they had succeeded in getting the supper well under way.

Upon her arrival Mrs. Norris announced her intention of roasting a potato.

"Gumgum, please sit down," begged her daughter. "You are only upsetting everything," and she laid an unfilial hand upon her mother's arm.

"I am going to roast a potato," Mrs. Norris cried, shaking herself free and seizing upon a pared potato. "Tommy, get me a stick."

"Isn't she awful," laughed Mary. "Don't you dare give her a stick, Tom." But Tom did dare, and Mrs. Norris, with her smiling benignity, stood waving the stick back and forth over the fire in time with the andante movement of her favourite Brahms sonata.

"Well, we might as well get ready to eat that old stuff," said Nancy to Furbush. "Don't you dread it?"

"I would not dread it, dear, so much, dreaded I not mother more," he replied, to Mary's intense gratification. But Tom, who heard the low-spoken words, thought them decidedly forced and disliked Furbush the more for them.

Furbush's presence was undoubtedly a drawback to Tom's pleasure. How could he be natural with a person whom he disliked as much as he did Furbush and who he knew disliked him? Besides, he did not feel like being sprightly and picnicky with Nancy beside him. Instead, he felt homesick, or at least that is the way it seemed to him. Still, how could it be genuine homesickness when the object of his yearning was beside him? Nevertheless, there had been in his thoughts recently the picture of a certain small colonial house in Tutors' Lane, a house now for rent or for sale. Possibly, however, the contrast of such a life—the house would be furnished with highboys and gate-leg tables and oval,

woven mats—with his present one at Mrs. Ruddel's furnished him with a genuine case of homesickness, after all. How perfect would life be in such surroundings! He liked to think of breakfast: He and Nancy, alone, except, of course, for the pretty, efficient maid—at their mahogany breakfast table. Nancy, busy with the coffee things at one end and he at the other—no, at the side—tucking away his grapefruit and bacon and hot buttered muffins and jam in the last few minutes before he dashed off up the hill to his eight-thirty. Good heavens, what a life that would be! He saw Nancy with the morning light on her hair and her pleasant, lively face—the nose with only the faintest possible trace of powder—bending over his cup; and then he realized that he was gazing at her now in the same position, only with the sunset light in her hair, and with a white porcelain cup receiving the coffee out of a thermos bottle, instead of a china cup from a swelling-silver pot.

"Careful Tommy, you are dribbling it all over me."

"Oh, Nancy, I'm so sorry. I ask you, isn't that stupid. Please excuse me."

"A little lemon or a hot iron or soap and water will fix it, probably," said Furbush.

Tom looked over at Furbush. He hated his liquid tones, like honey dripping on a blue plush sofa. "How the hell do you get that way?" he wanted to ask—then he rounded out the sentence with certain phrases which had been current among

our heroes along all war fronts from Kamchatka to Trieste. Even a milder remark was happily averted, for at this point the potato which Mrs. Norris had been steadily roasting, burst into flame and had to be plunged into the fire; a grateful accident, for now she was willing to sit down on the camp stool brought for her and to confine herself to the slicing of the bread.

What passed until the meal was finished was of slight significance. It was a decidedly detached party, the two couples being brought together chiefly through Mrs. Norris; and when Nancy and Tom had finished a banana which they had divided in the jolly picnic way, Tom stood up. "Do you realize," he asked Nancy, "that this is a wishing carpet we've been sitting on? Let's take it down by the creek and see where it will take us."

"Oh, dear," said Mrs. Norris, not at all displeased. "And now where are you and Mary going?"

"We're going to look for crocuses in the garden of the Queen of the Fairies," replied Furbush. "They ought to be up now."

"Well, take along this flashlight: it's getting awfully bosky-wosky in there." And then Mrs. Norris was left alone with Julia, whom she entertained with an animated and brilliant account of Titania and Oberon.

"Where shall we go?" asked Tom when they were seated on the magic motor rug.

"Let's go to Libya!" said Nancy promptly.

"Libya! Well, I suppose we might as well go there as anywhere. You realize, of course, that we won't go until I put my foot on the carpet"—his left foot was straggling over the edge.

"Perhaps you'd better keep it there for a few minutes, then, until we are sure that we really want to go. As a matter of fact, I think it is rather nice right here in Woodbridge," and she smiled up at him.

Nancy had, of course, smiled upon a great many young men without precipitating a proposal of marriage, but then, the young men had probably not woven her image into their future hopes and fears as thoroughly as he had. Also the hour and the place lent their potency to her smile. The soft spring evening, happily extended by Daylight Saving, the noisy little creek running by their feet, and the staunch ally of all such projects, the great round moon, all combined to weave a spell, just as Mrs. Norris planned that they should.

Tom had come to the picnic prepared to speak his mind, not doubting that an opportunity would be given him. He had not memorized a speech, but was ready to trust to the inspiration of the moment. His cause was an honest one; he might expect the gift of tongues, but the starting gun had now been fired, the race was on, and he was not granted the gift of tongues. A little preparation might not have been amiss, after all.

"I agree with you about Woodbridge. In fact, I think had rather go on living here than anywhere

else in the world, provided one thing." He had plunged in without the gift of tongues.

It was not so dark but that Tom could see the colour come into her face. "Provided what, Tom?"

"Provided I can have you, Nancy. Provided you can love me as I love you." He had come nearer her, and although he had brought both feet upon the magic carpet, they remained stationary. "You mean more to me than anything I have ever known. I used to wonder how I could ever think more of anyone than I thought of Woodbridge and the Star and the different boys in college, but that was nothing compared to this." Nancy was tracing a series of geometrical patterns upon the magic carpet with a bit of stick. "I wish I could do something to show you how much I care now." Still Nancy said nothing. "And, oh, Nancy, what you could do for me! With you to help me, I think I could do anything. But I know I need you. Nancy, will you marry me?"

Nancy was hardly prepared for this. She had, since the social service fiasco, acknowledged to herself that she had grown in that short space very fond of Tom. She looked forward to seeing him, and when he was gone she went over with pleasure what he had said and how he had looked. She liked his drollery and his strength, she admired his poise and self-reliance; and she had the greatest respect for his teaching ability, of which she had received direct proof. Still, she was not at all sure that she wished to marry him. After all, she had

really known him only something over a month, and it was not the Whitman way to hurry into anything —least of all into matrimony.

"You mustn't ask me that, Tom."

"Why not, Nancy?"

"Because I cannot accept; not now."

"You mean that perhaps you can later? For of course I shall never grow tired of asking you."

The moon had climbed a little and had turned a silvery yellow. It flooded the rock and the people moving about on it, but Nancy and Tom remained in shadow. "Tell me, Nancy," he said, leaning over and covering with his own the hand upon which she was resting, "tell me that I may ask you again, for, dear Nancy, I cannot lose you." She did not draw her hand away immediately and when she did so she did it gently.

"You're awfully good, Tom," she said and Tom's heart swelled at the softness of her tone. Then she climbed to her feet, and—Tom picking up the magic carpet, which had become soaked through with the dampness of the creek bank—they made their way back to the rock.

And so ended their first love scene. That Tom's behaviour will appear tepid, in these vigorous days, is to be feared. His own contemporaries, of both sexes, will almost certainly be the first to point out that had they been in his place nothing would have kept them from proceeding from the tame seizure of Nancy's hand to some bolder action. Tom, however, helping Nancy along over the rocks

and sticks was happily oblivious of his unconventionality. The beauteous evening did, in very truth, seem calm and free to him, though the party on the rock was making a little too much noise to have the holy time quiet as a nun, breathless with adoration. His mind turned to the scrap of Wordsworth he had lately memorized, and though he was a trifle annoyed to find that he couldn't, even now, perhaps when he most wanted it, remember all, the phrase "comfort and command" stayed with him and did nicely for the whole.

XIII

TOM telephoned to Mrs. Norris the next day to make certain that he might see her. He felt that she was an ally in the matter of Nancy, and it was important to get her advice.

He found her knitting by the yellow lamp in the library. "Well, Tommy dear," she said, looking at him with a quizzical smile, "was the picnic a success?"

"Mrs. Norris, you are wonderful. When I think how much I owe to your generation. After all, I think a woman is loveliest at fifty."

"Oh, flatterer!"

"But you know you cannot get that fine *savoir vivre* before."

"Oh dear me, how much more *savoir vivre* I'll have when I'm eighty. What an old charmer I'll be then! Will you come to see me when I'm eighty, Tommy?"

"What a question!"

"Well, I hope you won't take me off on any old wishing carpet and put me down in a damp, horrid place and give me tonsilitis."

"Who has tonsilitis?"

"Nancy, of course, and you gave it to her, you bad thing."

Tonsilitis! He remembered now the damp rug and also certain sniffles that had required, from time to time on the homeward trip, the administration of a diminutive handkerchief with a pretty "N" embroidered, he knew, in the corner. So that is the way he would look after her!

"What can I do about it?" It was true that Mrs. Norris was taking it very calmly.

"Do? Why, you can't do anything but wait until she gets over it. You might go and see her when she begins to pick up."

"I caught cold myself." He had at least been true to that extent.

"Are you doing anything for it? Remind me when you go, and I'll give you some Squim. It's something new, and it did wonders for Mary."

"Don't you think it might be nice for me to send Nancy some?" asked Tom, laughing. Tonsilitis was seldom fatal, after all; and what an excellent excuse to visit her it would be when she was getting better!

"Tommy, dear, haven't you something to tell me?"

"No, not really."

"Not anything?"

"Well, hardly anything." He was sitting near her, and now he leaned forward and whispered, "I asked her to be my wife, and she refused." It was not said, however, in the tone one would expect for such an unhappy message. Mrs. Norris looked at him curiously. "She said she couldn't answer me

now, but as good as gave me permission to ask her again—and when a girl talks that way, isn't it as good as settled?"

It did look promising, certainly. But then, there was Henry. "What about Henry?" she asked. "How does he feel?"

"What has he to do with it?"

"Oh my, he was a lot to do with it. He's more than just a brother, you know. He's her father and mother."

"And aunt, maiden aunt, as well."

Mrs. Norris laughed. "Henry's to be reckoned with, though, just like Marshal Ney—or was it Cincinnatus? I never can remember."

"But, Mrs. Norris, what am I to do?"

"Why, you must just be very nice and thoughtful to Nancy and as decent as you can be to Henry, and pray the Good Lord will help you."

"Will you pray for me, too?" Tom had played too much baseball not to appreciate the value of organized cheering.

"Yes, I'll pray for you." And then Tom jumped up and planted a thoroughgoing kiss—which was designed for the cheek, but which, upon her turning quickly, was delivered, in a manner that even Leofwin would have applauded—upon her neck.

On the sixth day Nancy sat up for a while during Miss Albers' hour and a half off. There was an abutment at one end of her room which overlooked the Whitman garden and carried the eye on

down the hill until it rested on the factory in Whitmanville—the factory which made the garden possible for her. There was a letter in her lap from Tom. It had come with his roses and it asked her to go with him to the boat race. There was also a book in her lap, but she made no effort to read it; it was so much easier just to gaze out of the window and let her mind wander where it would.

Henry knocked and entered. "Well, this is very nice. Do you really feel a lot better?"

"Ever so much, thank you. I think probably I'll get up in a day or two."

"I suppose you'll want your tonsils out now, won't you?" The question of a tonsilectomy had been a moot one for years. Nancy had always been anxious to have them out, having been told that it was merely a case of "snip, snip, and a day on ice cream." Henry, who regarded tonsilectomy skeptically as a fad, and who knew, furthermore, that it was a major operation for adults and that old Mrs. Merton hadn't walked straight since she had had hers out, was strongly opposed. This had, in fact, been an exceedingly sore point with them, and the amount of unhappiness engendered by it was considerably in excess of that which would have resulted from an operation when it was first suggested.

"I'll have to wait, of course, until I get well over this. It isn't like a rheumatism, you know." Nancy had learned the jargon thoroughly.

Well, that subject was now disposed of, and Henry, with the directness of a trained economist,

abruptly went into the main object of his call. There had been certain features about Nancy's delirium which had astonished and annoyed him, and he had come with the express purpose of discussing them should he find Nancy strong enough. He now decided that she was strong enough. "Do you realize that when your fever was high you talked at a great rate?" he asked.

"I vaguely remember mumbling and grumbling."

Henry did not relish his task, but he felt it to be his duty—and Henry had never been one to shirk his duty. "You talked a great deal about this Tom Reynolds," he said.

"Yes?" Nancy was aware that she coloured. She was aware also of a sudden sinking sensation, not dissimilar to the one that comes from a too rapid drop in an elevator. So Henry had come to her at the first possible moment to protest against "this Tom Reynolds." "He has had a bad recitation," she thought, "and now he is going to take it out on me," and then she called her brother a hard and inelegant name, as people will when angry with their dearest relatives. Had Nancy been of a satirical nature she might have made something of her brother's adoption of Freudian methods; but she was not, and she knew only direct-fire warfare.

"Nancy," Henry went on, leaning towards her, "surely you are not in love with that man?"

Had Tom been a head hunter with tin cans in his ears, Nancy would have loved him at that moment.

"Yes, I am," she said.

Henry stared at her. It was clear she meant what she said. Then he glanced at the letter and the book that lay in her lap, as people will notice small things at such times. He guessed in whose handwriting the letter was, and—the book was *Sonnets from the Portuguese*! She had even taken to sentimental rubbish!

"Oh Nancy, can't you see that he is not worthy of you? Who are his people? Where is he from? I wouldn't give *that* for his future here. He's lazy, and he's filled you up on a lot of poetry. Nancy, think well of it before it's too late." She was gazing out the window, hardly hearing him. She had confessed aloud, before Henry, that she loved Tom. Henry was going on. "If you won't think of yourself, perhaps you can think of Henry Third? What is to become of him if you go?"

Nancy turned to look at him. She felt giddy now, and she thought she was going to cry. It would not do, however, to make a scene, when up to this point she had acquitted herself so well. "You mean that I should give up my life to look after your son?"

"Please don't be melodramatic. We know one another so well it isn't necessary. I am not asking you to give up your life. I am asking you not to throw it away, and in the meantime you have certain definite obligations here. You are more than an aunt to Henry. Life here with him will be far better for you than being the wife of that uncertain boy."

She allowed it to pass, but it gave the final flick to her anger. "You are the kind of person, Henry, who is so monumentally selfish that you think everybody who dares to cross you in any way is himself monumentally selfish too. Now you come to me in a protective rôle to save me from 'this Tom Reynolds' with a mass of ill-natured slander—and lies—because if I go to him you will have to get a new housekeeper."

"Nancy—"

"Don't interrupt me, please. It would be the same, no matter who came. You would find some dreadful fault in anyone. You always have been jealous of every man that ever came here and if you had your way you would keep me here for life." Nancy paused, but her brother did not offer to speak. She had asked not to be interrupted, and he would be quite sure that she was through before he spoke again, but he could not conceal his anger. Nancy noticed it, and her own anger increased. "I don't think I'd mind it so much, if you didn't pretend that it was all for my good. That is nothing but rank hypocrisy. Just what have you ever done to make my life pleasant here? You are never interested in what I'm interested in, outside of Harry. This lecture business you just laughed and sneered at. I admit it was ridiculous, but you wouldn't lift your finger to make it less so. I admit, also, that I would appreciate a little attention once in a while, but it would never occur to you to give me any pleasure unless you had to, to get some for yourself.

When you really want to give me a good time you sit down and talk to me about your miserable old Labour class and what a wonderful lecture you gave them. Well, Henry, that time is past, and I am going to have my own life from now on." And the tears which she had been fighting back were no longer to be denied.

Henry was entirely put out, and he awkwardly got up. Now was clearly not the time to renew the attack. Nothing that Nancy had said was of the slightest significance, except her lack of interest in his work. There, indeed, was a sorry confession of inability to forget herself in the greatest interest of her nearest relation. Poor wilful girl! Well, he had done his duty. No one could charge him with unbrotherliness.

Nancy had also got up. "Please go away," she sobbed; and Henry, without further word, did so.

Nancy crawled back into bed and had her cry out. What a brute he was—and what a god was Tom! What a miserable snob Henry was about family—and then for him to say that Tom had no future! Had Tom been a member of his wretched old Grave, he would have had a very different view of it. That was the cause of nine-tenths of his dislike, anyway. Tom was in the rival club and Henry never could see any good in anyone connected with it. What a miserable, juvenile business! Had not Tom frankly confessed his need of help? Henry had never in any way indicated that she could be of service to him, except to order his meals and keep him comfor-

table. But Tom had thrown himself upon her. He "needed" her—that had been his word. With her to help him he felt that he could do anything. What a career for a girl! That would be living indeed.

She thought of his unanswered letter and climbed out of bed at once. "Dear Tom," she wrote, and again the tears came into her eyes, "Thank you so much for the lovely flowers. They are by my bed and I can enjoy them all day long. It is awfully nice of you to ask me to the Boat Race and I accept with pleasure. I don't think there will be any question about my being able to make it. In two weeks I should be perfectly well again.

"It will be lovely to see you and I can do so at any time now.

"As ever,
"NANCY."

The final draft of the letter was composed only after three preliminary ones. Nancy found it extremely difficult to get just the right tone. She couldn't put too much warmth into it, and yet it mustn't be too cold. So she sat at her desk, copying and recopying, and only succeeded in finishing it when Miss Albers returned.

"I've done it at last," she announced proudly, her cheeks aflame. Miss Albers, fortunately one of the few surviving members of the Good Nurse family, saw the situation immediately.

"Why, I see you have," she said. "Isn't that

fine! Now I think you are entitled to a nice nap." And when Tom arrived, post-haste upon receipt of Nancy's note, he was met at the front door with the news of her relapse.

XIV

WHEN Tom reached the Whitman house on the day of the race, he found it full. He had seen Nancy only once since her illness; and as her room had then been filled with people, his call was not remarkable. He had not failed to notice, nevertheless, that the colour came into her face as he entered the room; and there had been other auspicious signs which had had an exciting effect upon his pulse. This call had been made only two days before the race, and it was then clear that Nancy could not go with him. A Philadelphia cousin had, however, announced her arrival—a particular friend of hers being in the Woodbridge boat—and would Tom mind taking her? Uncle Bob Whitman had wonderful seats, being an Overseer, but he wasn't going to be able to use them, and—of course Tom would be only too happy to take her.

Nancy, pale and lovely, was serving tea, but she found time to thank him again for his goodness about the Philadelphia cousin, and then she took him over to be presented. On the way across the room they passed Henry. Tom, who stared at him, missed the tell-tale blush on Nancy's cheeks. Instead, he only saw Henry shift his eyes calmly

from Nancy to him and bow coldly. Tom bowed as coldly in his turn, and then Nancy left him with the Philadelphia cousin.

Lily Griffin, the Philadelphia cousin, gazed at him steadily from under the floppy expanse of her black hat. She was sitting on a low cane covered bench before the fireplace, and her legs, which were encased in light grey silk stockings and which terminated in slippers of the same color, her legs, let it be relentlessly repeated, were the most conspicuous things in the room. Over her shoulders were the thin strings of an undergarment that Tom thought was generally concealed. Still, one couldn't be at all sure about such things from one day to the next.

"Would you mind taking my cigarette?" she asked, handing him the stub.

"So you know Platt Raeburn," he began amiably when he had returned from his pretty task.

"Yes."

"He's an awfully nice boy. I know him quite well." Platt was in the Star; and Lily, who knew a great deal about such things, immediately suspected that Tom was also. How else would a professor know a crew star "quite well"? Her interest in Tom rose. He had, as a matter of fact, attractive eyes; and that cerise-coloured knitted tie with a pearl stickpin might indicate much.

"Platt is a nice boy, isn't he?" she continued with a shade more enthusiasm. "We went on the most wonderful party this Easter. He wasn't in training then, you know, and I have never seen any one fun-

nier than he was. We were at the Greysons' in Ardmore, and Platt thought he was insulted by the butler when he took Platt's cigarette off a table and threw it in the fire. It was burning the table, but old Platt didn't know that, and he knocked the man down."

"It must have been funny," said Tom, who had heard the story before.

"Oh, it was a scream. I thought I'd die laughing. It was really awfully bad of him, though, don't you think?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Tom boldly. "I don't think it was so very bad. You've got to expect that sort of thing nowadays."

"Mercy, I didn't think you'd say that. Aren't you a professor here, or something?"

"Yes, something."

"Well, but I always thought——"

"What?" with a smile.

"Oh, nothing. Say, just between you and I, don't you think this is rather slow?" and she gave him a look that showed he was making good.

The hospitality they were accepting was, of course, his own Nancy's, and to be strictly honourable he should have defended everything, but with certain definite reservations in his mind he replied, "Deadly."

"That dreadful old creature over there actually eyed me when I smoked that last cig." The dreadful old creature was Mrs. Conover, who found it difficult to reconstruct herself to the present century.

"I should think it would be awfully stupid living here. Now, isn't it really?"

"No, it isn't half bad."

"Oh, I can see you're a highbrow, like all the rest of them. Personally, I couldn't stand it. I'm too independent, I guess. What a sweet dog." Clarence was before her, arrayed in the Woodbridge colours. "I love dogs. I've the sweetest little Boston bull bitch at home. She won a silver flask for me last year." She was examining Clarence with the eye of a practised dogwoman. "Do you know anything about Airedales?" Tom didn't. "I suspect his tail is wrong," she said. "Now run along, sweetie," she called to Clarence; "momma can't have a baby with wrong tail." Clarence received this incredulously, but a complication was averted by the arrival of Nancy. "We were just criticizing your dog, my dear. Why don't you have his tail fixed?"

"Why, what's the matter with it?" asked Nancy. She hated the thought of anything having happened to Clarence.

"Why, it's too long. You should have two inches at least cut off." The picture of Clarence going around with his tail done up in a bandage was a delightful one, and Nancy laughed.

Lily appealed to Tom. "Isn't she heartless?" But before Tom could answer the slightly embarrassing question, the cruel one announced that they had better be on their way, as the race started at five and it was then half-past four. So they hustled

into the Whitman motor and drove to Center, where the new observation train was already filling.

The race with Hartley was always one of the great spring events, but the new observation train made it more of an event than ever. People gloated over it as though they had never seen a train before, much to the amusement of Lily, whose attendance at New London had been frequent. Many paused admiringly at the engine and, as they passed on up the line of a dozen cars, loudly proclaimed their admiration of the entire arrangement. "They are just like prairie schooners," said one young man, to Lily's huge delight, for she had never before seen so much provincialism all at once. The platform was thick with people rushing to find their cars at the last minute. All was hurry and excitement and colour and laughter. The orange of Woodbridge and the olive of Hartley were everywhere. Each person boldly displayed his colours, whether with flowers or feathers, and it was clear that earth had few greater pleasures than this. Then the engine tooted and rang its bell, and with a convulsive wrench they were off, amid the cheers of everyone.

Tom and his Lily were seated between the Hartley cheering section and the Woodbridge cheering section, in the very choice seats which Mr. Whitman naturally commanded and Tom, although he thought boat racing a much overrated sport and resented its being preferred to baseball, felt a distinct thrill as they passed out upon the river bank and up to

the starting point. Only the cold unseasonable wind which swept down the course, riffling the water and chilling every one to the bone, marred the day.

They arrived at the starting point, and the occupants of the new cars wrapped what little they had around them. Quite obviously, the race could not be rowed until the wind died. There was nothing to do but just sit and wait.

The Hartley cheering section immediately climbed down upon the bank, with the exception of one young man who was left with his head lolling over the side of the car next to Tom. Friendly remonstrance had been futile. He had refused to move and had elected to slumber. "I think he's sweet," said Lily, gazing over at him. "Tell me, do you have much trouble getting liquor here?"

"No," said Tom. Already the spell of the day was wearing off.

"I've learned, to my sorrow that you can't be too careful. Such a time as I had last month! I went out to a luncheon party—May Stephens—you know her? Well, just before luncheon I was astonished to see cocktails appear. I didn't think May had any stock, but there she was just the same, jiggling the shaker up and down. Well, at the first sip I thought something was funny, but there was nothing to do about it; and then May gave me a dividend, and although it nearly killed me, I managed to get it down, and then when we were all through she asked us how we liked it. Well, I told her I thought it was a little funny, and then she announced

what I knew all along; that she had made it herself. 'I made it out of spirits of nitre,' she said. 'Did you boil off the ether?' someone asked, and she said she hadn't! Well, we hadn't got hardly started at lunch when one of the girls passed right straight out and then we all began feeling trembly and queer, and then the next thing I knew I was at home in bed, and I wasn't up and about for a week. Wasn't that awful?"

Tom's enthusiasm was ebbing fast. What a prodigious bore this race was going to be! The wind was blowing up his legs, and his light spring overcoat was far from ample. The seats were too close together and were of a granite hardness; but he and Lily were wedged into the back and could not escape without treading upon the toes of half of Woodbridge's notables. So he sat still and tried to smile brightly at the conclusion of her story.

"Do you know?" Lily continued, "I think you have a lovely smile."

"Goody," replied Tom, and smiled again, this time rather archly.

Lily was examining him between half closed lids. "And I think you have nice eyes, too—particularly the lashes. They are so long and silky."

"Well, it's a great secret, of course," replied Tom, "and you mustn't tell even your mother" —Lily giggled—"but I think you have the prettiest way with you I have ever seen."

"Oh, dear me, you are funny. Now you must keep me warm."

The car, it has been pointed out, was full of Woodbridge notables, and any warming of the young lady would not have been looked upon with favour. Nor would Tom have cared to warm her had they been quite alone at the North Pole. What an ordeal this was getting to be, and how lucky was Nancy, comfortably seated before the fire! How good would that particular fire be, and what a soft and fragrant place to ask a certain question! What a contrast Nancy made to this miserable girl beside him! Nancy at the time happened to be repairing certain ravages that the tea had made upon her nephew's best blue suit, but the scheme of Tom's thoughts was not spoiled.

"Bad man, you're not showing me any kind of a time."

Tom was exasperated. A group in front of them had built a fire. "How would you like to go down there?" he asked. "Can you climb down over the side here?"

"'Course I can."

Tom climbed over the railing, dropped to the ground, and, turning his ankle, cried "Ouch!" loudly enough to waken the young Hartley man whose head was lolling over the adjacent railing. The youth looked up and beheld the lovely Lily poised, apparently preparing to fly into his arms. He reared himself up. "Come, lovely girl," he cried, "I love you." And then as she swooped by, he made a grab at her and tore her dress.

"You bad boy," she cried, with little discretion, "you tore my dress."

"You bad boy," repeated the young Hartley man, "yuhtoradress, yuhtoradress."

Tom had managed to hurry her away, although his ankle hurt him considerably, but not until all the notables had seen the performance. What a mortifying affair. No doubt many supposed that he was the one who had torn the dress.

Fortunately, Lily met a friend at the fire, and Tom was free for the time being. Would the wind never die down? The flag on the coach's launch was not quite so active. There was a rumour that they would start at six-thirty. Only half an hour more. Well, he could stand that. Lily seemed to be having a time with her new young man, and he limped over to a neighbouring fire where there were fewer Lilies and more heat. There he met a classmate of whom he was particularly fond; and before he knew it the starter's launch had put out into the river, and the parties around the fires were scampering back aboard the train. With considerable difficulty he followed Lily up over the side, for his foot was now swollen and painful. Finally, however, they were seated again, buoyed up with the thought of the race's being at last under way—when the starter's boat retired from the scene, and word arrived that the race would not be rowed until seven.

Tom could not cover his disappointment.

"I don't think you are very polite!" said Lily.

"Sorry," replied Tom, his ankle throbbing.

"In fact I think you're horrid."

"Good!" said Tom. Lily looked her rage and half turned her back on him Well, that was something to be thankful for, at any rate.

They sat there in ever-increasing gloom. Some of the Lilies gamboled back to shiver over the fires, but even they were beginning to droop. Tom's Lily would have joined them—her new friend was not a wet smack—but Tom, with his throbbing ankle, did not offer to go, and she was too proud to suggest it. So they sat and waited.

The race was eventually rowed. At the starter's gun the train gave another convulsive jerk, which sent Tom's injured foot flying against the side of the car, and the crowd fanned into life its jaded enthusiasm. Out in the gathering dusk the two crews inched their way along. It was not quite clear which was which, the blades both showing black, and though Lily was certain she had located Platt and cheered lustily for his boat, subsequent evidence indicated that he was in the other. The two cheering sections woke to frenzy, and the notables' car was swept with confusion. Lily was beside herself and kept jumping to her feet with an appealing cry of "Oh Platt!" Tom looked over at the Hartley car at one point and saw that his friend had apparently had fresh access to his source of refreshment, for he was now blissfully asleep, cheek on the railing.

At the two-mile stake—with a final mile to go—

the boats were even, but both sides were jubilant, for from each section it clearly showed that the home crew was ahead. Then the train shot behind a heavily timbered point, and when the view of the river was again free, the Woodbridge shell was half a length behind and obviously beaten. A pang of disappointment shot through Tom. Oh, well, it was a fitting climax to the day. There they were, slipping back and back. They were splashing badly, and one of the Woodbridge men was obviously not pulling his weight. Then the Hartley boat flashed over the finish amid the tooting of countless automobiles along the banks, a winner by a length and a quarter.

The Hartley people had given way to a transport of joy, while their coxswain crawled along his shell throwing water over the chests and faces of his men. The two boats floated idly about, their crews bowed foward, gasping in agony for strength. To the men in the Hartley boat came the faint sound of their grateful supporters. They had won —and what was an enlarged heart or, possibly, a damaged kidney, to such glory? The half hysterical screams of their Lilies were sweet compensation. As for the Woodbridge crew, well, they would have to swallow their dose as best they could—and wait for next year.

The young Hartley man next to Tom woke up. " 'S the race over?" he asked.

"Yes, it's over," shouted Tom, for no one else heard him.

"Thank God," he shouted hoarsely, and went back to sleep—a sentiment which cheered Tom so much that Lily, on the homeward trip, decided he wasn't quite such a dumb-bunny, after all.

XV

SCARCELY a day went by now without Tom's tracing his steps to the Norris house. He seldom bothered any more with the formality of the door: going around to the terrace side, he walked into the drawing-room unannounced. If no one was at home, he sat down with a magazine or book in the library or drummed at the piano. Then, possibly, he would go before anyone arrived; but the house which was so friendly to him and so full of Nancy, was far dearer to him than her own, for Henry's hostility was too marked to make his visits there other than difficult.

So it was that he came unexpectedly upon Mrs. Norris, Mary, and Nancy when he walked into the library on the day following the race; and then he regretted his free and easy entrance. For Mary was in tears and was receiving the comfort of her mother and friend. Tom backed hurriedly out, muttering an inarticulate apology and cursing himself for an awkward fool. Mary saw him, however, and with a sob brushed past him in the hall and went upstairs. Her mother who swept after her like a large and stately galleon in her black silk dress, was more troubled than he had ever seen her.

Still, as she passed, she told him not to mind. And then he was alone with Nancy.

"What on earth is the matter?" he asked. Nancy, too, was thoroughly upset.

"Just look at that," she said, and pointed to an article in a New York evening paper. "Woodbridge Professor Drowns," ran the headlines. "Overtaken by Cramps After Eating Cherries and Milk." It appeared that Professor Furbush had defied the popular fear of the fatal combination and, in order to make his defiance complete, had promptly gone in swimming after eating it. The tragedy had occurred at the country house of relatives; and though a number of people were present, they took his cries for help as a joke until it was too late. The account went on to explain that it was more sad even than it might at first appear, for it was generally supposed that the dead man had been engaged to marry Miss Mary Norris, daughter of the Acting President of Woodbridge.

"Why, isn't that dreadful," said Tom. It is always a little hard to know what should be said in such circumstances. If the one who has just died is close to us, we don't think about what to say at all, but if it is only an acquaintance and we are merely a little thrilled by his going, it is difficult; for decency requires a solemn look and a shocked word. So Tom did what he could to be decent; and Nancy, who was staring with half averted face out upon the garden, made no reply. She, of course, knew all the secrets of Mary's heart and must be sharing

her sorrow. Accordingly, any words from him, other than sympathetic ones for Mary's loss, would be untimely. Perhaps, even, she would insist upon remaining in sisterly spinsterhood! "It's awfully tough, isn't it," Tom added.

"Yes," said Nancy, somewhat faintly, from the curtains. Nancy seemed very much upset. Tom knew that Furbush had been a frequent visitor at her house, and probably she had grown fond of him. He was not at all aware, however, that Furbush's affair with Mary had progressed so far. He could not picture Furbush marrying Mary—or anyone else, for that matter—and he doubted whether Furbush would have married her. Still, it appeared that Mary had cared for him, and now her little romance was over.

"It's awfully hard on Mary, isn't it?"

"Yes."

Furbush was gone. Who would take his place? His place, an Assistant Professorship—there was now a vacancy! A flood of excitement swept through him. But how foolish to expect that it would fall to him. He had taught but one year, and he was only twenty-five. People still spoke of Harry Spear's having been given his Assistant Professorship at the end of three years as a record-breaking performance. He knew perfectly well, furthermore, that he had not made a startling success of it; not the kind of success that makes a man jump from a Captaincy to a Brigadiership. Still, he thought he stood quite as well as the other young in-

structors in the department; and his "outside connections" were considerably better. After all, a man's career in college counted for something. And so, although he knew that the thing was impossible and that what they would do would be to go outside for an older man, he luxuriated for a moment in the picture of the Dean congratulating him on his success. An Assistant Professorship and Nancy! The two were linked in his mind as the sum-total of desire; and since he could think of Nancy without thinking of the Assistant Professorship, but could not think of the Professorship without thinking of Nancy, it is to be supposseed that Nancy came first.

And there she was now, over by the window, painfully aware of the garden and fidgeting ever so little with the curtain. Perhaps this might not be such a bad time to repeat his question, after all. Had she not of her own free will come to the Norris house, at which she knew that he was almost a daily visitor? There was in that something to give him heart. As if he hadn't enough evidence without it!

"You will admit, though, Nancy, that it was an awfully stupid thing for him to eat the cherries and milk, won't you? Everyone knows that it can't be done." Tom moved over nearer to her, but she did not answer him. Instead, she fixed her eyes steadily on the bulging root of an elm in the garden. She must concentrate everything on that to keep from being an utter fool. But what an hour it had been! First the dreadful news about Furbush and that thing in the paper, and then Tom's unexpected

entrance. How wonderful he looked as he came into the room; he had been so self-possessed, and she should have been such a ninny in his place!

Tom took a step nearer. "Nancy," he said very tenderly.

The root was waving now; it *would* become indistinct. How gentle he was, and how different from Henry! "Nancy!" he repeated. Then the root became altogether blurred and meaningless, and she felt him take her in his arms and kiss her. "Darling Nancy," he was saying; and, somehow, to her great relief, she found an apparently adequate reply.

It was decided that a long engagment was altogether unnecessary, a decision which was without repeal, in view of the absence of parental supervision. Why waste the perfectly good summer? Why indeed? And so the wedding was set for a few days after Commencement.

"That will give me just about enough time to get ready," said Nancy, "and I really think you must get a new cutaway."

Then at last Commencement was over. The electricians bore away for another year the last of the class numeral signs which had hung from their respective Headquarters. The Headquarters themselves had been swept and cleaned and restored to their owners, and one by one the dwellers in Tutors' Lane prepared to board up their houses for the summer and depart for the mountains or for the shore.

The wedding alone kept most of them in Woodbridge. Few there were that had not some pleasant memory of Nancy, and the sacrifice of a day or two of vacation was counted as little. Furbush's dramatic end had held the centre of the Woodbridge stage, but it was now forced into the background by the question: Was Tom good enough for Nancy? It was generally agreed that he was getting the best of it, but not many thought that she was altogether throwing herself away upon him. Nancy might have married anyone, it was pointed out, and having had so much responsibility, she could have graced the board of a much older man. Instead, she had chosen a young instructor—a pleasant enough boy, perhaps but still unproved. Well, Nancy would make the most of him, there was no question of that, and of course he was a great friend of the Norrises and it was known that Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee herself approved of the match. So they would hope for the best, and Nancy *was* a dear girl.

Tom was in perfect accord with the last sentiment, and it will perhaps be charitable to draw a veil over his behaviour at this time. Such names as "Mrs. Mouse" and "Boofly Woofly" are all very well when whispered teasingly into the delighted ear of one's intended, but they hardly stand the light of unromantic day. They have even been known to set up opposing currents of emotion in breasts not so nicely attuned, and to inspire such expressions as "Fish!" or even "Blat!" It may well

be a considerate office, therefore, not to submit our lovers to the graceless manners of the unsympathetic, but to let them enjoy their artless passages unmolested.

One of these, alone, might be risked. Nancy had confidingly told him that she had all the faith in the world in his future, and he heard her gratefully. "Why, the way you talked to those men at the mill shows clearly enough what you can do," she said.

Tom coloured slightly, but let the moment pass without explanation. When he had first done so it was with the mental reservation that he would laughingly explain it some day, and he would, too, but it wasn't yet just the right time. So he stooped and kissed her affectionately; and then, as he was hatless at the time, she was reminded of something she had long wanted to tell him.

"If you don't look out, Tom, you will be perfectly bald in five years."

"Well, I've done everything I can, and——"

"Now, all you have to do is to brush it five minutes in the morning and five minutes at night."

"Ten minutes a day! I should be exhausted."

"Well, I shall do it for you, then." Whereupon the scene acquired an excess of sentiment at once.

Certain more mundane passages may be observed, however, without any particular offence.

The passages that took place around the opening of the wedding presents were possibly as diverting as any. Tom, whose mind's eye was ever

upon the little colonial house in Tutors' Lane, now his property, was perhaps more concerned than most grooms are in the furnishing of his nest. He found himself greatly elated when he or his bride would draw forth some shining prize of a silver bowl or plate—until they began getting too many of them—and correspondingly depressed when some many-coloured glass lamp or strange dish would appear. What on earth could they do with them? Dear old Mrs. Conover, for example, sent a large Bohemian glass jar of a peacock-eyes pattern. It would have to be on view when she called, and as they had no way of knowing when that would be, it had to be on view all the time.

From Omaha came an ominous package which made Tom shudder. Would his sister contrive to mortify him? He could picture her pleasure in doing so, and when the package was opened and out came two china parrots, Tom thought the pleasure was hers. A note which came with the birds explained that they were very fashionable in Omaha at the time and that all Omaha had them on its dinner table. To Tom, his sister's gift and note could hardly have been worse, but Nancy kissed him and told him not to be stupid, that the parrots were nice; and Tom was so flustered he couldn't tell whether they were or not. At any rate, Nancy wrote a charming, sisterly little note, and Tom was more pleased with his future than ever.

The silver tea service which arrived early from Mrs. Robert Lee-Satterlee was among the grand-

est presents that Nancy received from outside the family. She was particularly grateful for it, since it enabled her to leave her mother's with Henry and thus avoid a discussion which would have been unendurable at the time. It was true that Henry's wife had had a tea service herself and that it was now his; but it was not so fine as the Whitman one, and Henry would have regarded its removal with a jaundiced eye. His wife's silver, however, was quite a bit more handsome than the family silver, and he relinquished the latter with a gesture so graceful that any further donation of property to the hymeneal happiness seemed almost fulsome. Still he did make a further contribution—a costly set of John Stuart Mill.

A few days after she announced her engagement Nancy was waited upon by the Misses Forbes. Their mission was one of obvious importance, for they seldom moved out of their warm little house, excepting, of course, Miss Jennie, who was quite indifferent to the outside and marched forth almost without a thought. They wore, furthermore, a serious demeanour—even Miss Jennie, whose assumption of a cavalier manner didn't quite hide her excitement. She was carrying a small parcel neatly done up in white tissue paper; and when, after a period of rocking, she launched upon the little speech she had prepared, her liver-spotted old hands opened and closed over it. "You must know, my dear," she said, "that we are going to miss you

very much. Of course, you are not really going away"—the little colonial house was in truth only a quarter of a mile farther from their house than Nancy's present one—"yet it can't be quite the same, and we want to mark your going with our love and best wishes. So we have brought you the Burnham lace for you to keep and hand down to your children, and may God bless you, my dear, and keep you." Then they all had a quiet turn at their handkerchiefs, and the Burnham lace passed into the House of Reynolds.

Leofwin also called and delivered his gift in person. Tom was fortunately in the room at the time, and the somewhat painful scene was not protracted. It was the first meeting they had had since Leofwin had offered his hand and been rejected, and even Leofwin was constrained. Nancy wondered if Elfrida were to have her trip to Italy, but she could not put the question without appearing unmaidenly since she knew so well the only condition of the trip; and as Woodbridge had not many girls that were eligible for Leofwin's love, the prospect was indeed black. "Your happiness is all I ask," he said in a low tone, and, despite the theatrical diction, even Tom was touched by his sincerity. "You know, of course," he went on, "that I am not in a position now to make an adequate expression of my wishes"—it *was* rather affecting even though nobody present quite knew what he meant—"but I have brought you the best I have. It is of small

material value, but its sentimental value is great. I did all my best work with it." Whereupon he handed her a paint brush.

With considerable of a to-do, Mrs. Norris announced the gift of a grandfather's clock. "There is no use, Nancy dear, in dragging it around from house to house, and I'm having it sent to your new one." Accordingly, when the expressman announced its arrival everyone proceeded to the little colonial house in Tutors' Lane. Then difficulties arose. To begin with, it was too tall for any room in the house; and after a great deal of staggering around with it, trying it first in this place and then in that, a gorgeous wooden plume which stuck up from its head had to be removed. Then it was discovered that there were no works in it, Mrs. Norris having bought only the case, supposing of course that the thing was complete. When finally the parts had all been assembled and adjusted—which was in the second year of Tom's and Nancy's married life—it was learned that the ways of the clock were nearly as eccentric as those of its donor, for when it went at all, the hands made the downward journey with so much rapidity that they were exhausted at the bottom and in no condition for the return trip. The end came one morning when the clock, which was known as "Aunt Helen," was discovered to have died at six-thirty; and, all horological assistance having been summoned in vain, it was suffered to stand in its corner, untouched ept by dust cloths, its hands forever pointing at

six-thirty, an eloquent warning of the end of indolence.

Although perhaps Mrs. Norris's contribution to the future life of our lovers was not distinguished by that perfect satisfaction which we all strive to furnish with our wedding gifts, her services at the wedding itself were invaluable. Nancy naturally turned to her for assistance with the thousand and one preliminaries that the bride's mother usually performs, and, moving in her own wondrous ways, Mrs. Norris saw to everything.

The night before the wedding arrived, and she gave a dinner for the bridal party. As, after considerable discussion, Nancy had consented to have the reception at the Norris house, Mrs. Norris relieved the minds of her people in the kitchen by having a buffet supper—and using paper napkins.

Nancy was grateful for this, for she was extremely tired, and the simpler everything could be, the better. So the supper was eaten all over the house and out on the terrace, and when the last paper napkin had been crumpled up, and the entire party had been brought together to drink the bride's health, and her future husband's, and their mutual healths, in the Dean's 1854 champagne, the party was whisked off up to the college church for rehearsal.

Upon arriving there, Nancy being engaged momentarily with Mary, who had heroically consented to be her maid of honour, Tom stole away by himself. Before the church the ridge sloped gently away, giving an unobstructed view of the valley.

The evening was a perfect one, and Tom enjoyed one of those rare moments when one feels in complete accord with everything. All around him were the sights and sounds of bucolic tranquillity; and within, apart from the comfortable effects of the Dean's wine and cigar, were such melting thoughts as we may only guess at. Life was now just beginning for him—and how good it was!

The sun died in ever darkening carmine. Tom flicked the ash from his cigar and held it up against the light. It matched perfectly. A long zeppelin-like cloud hung, apparently motionless, a little higher up. Tom moved his cigar up to it and cocked one eye. Again perfect harmony. But, even as he looked, the cloud thinned out at one end and spoiled it a little. Oh, well, it was perfect, anyway.

Behind him came the strains of the church organ and the voices of the bridal party. They were calling him. He paused deliciously, drinking in the last moments of his freedom. And then, throwing away his cigar, he passed quickly up the hill and into the lighted church.

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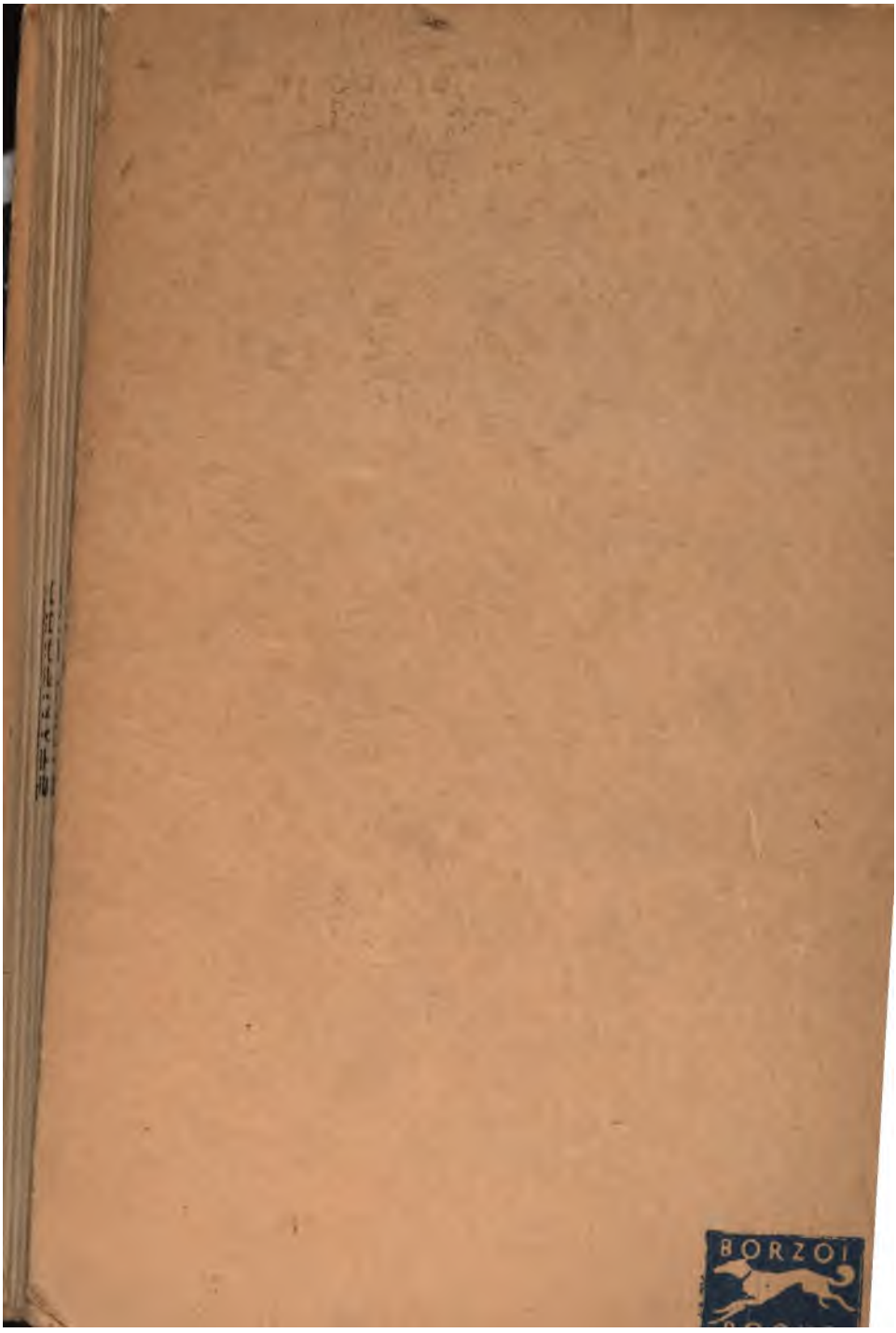
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